

MARVEL
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THE PUNISHER

YEAR ONE

BOOK ONE



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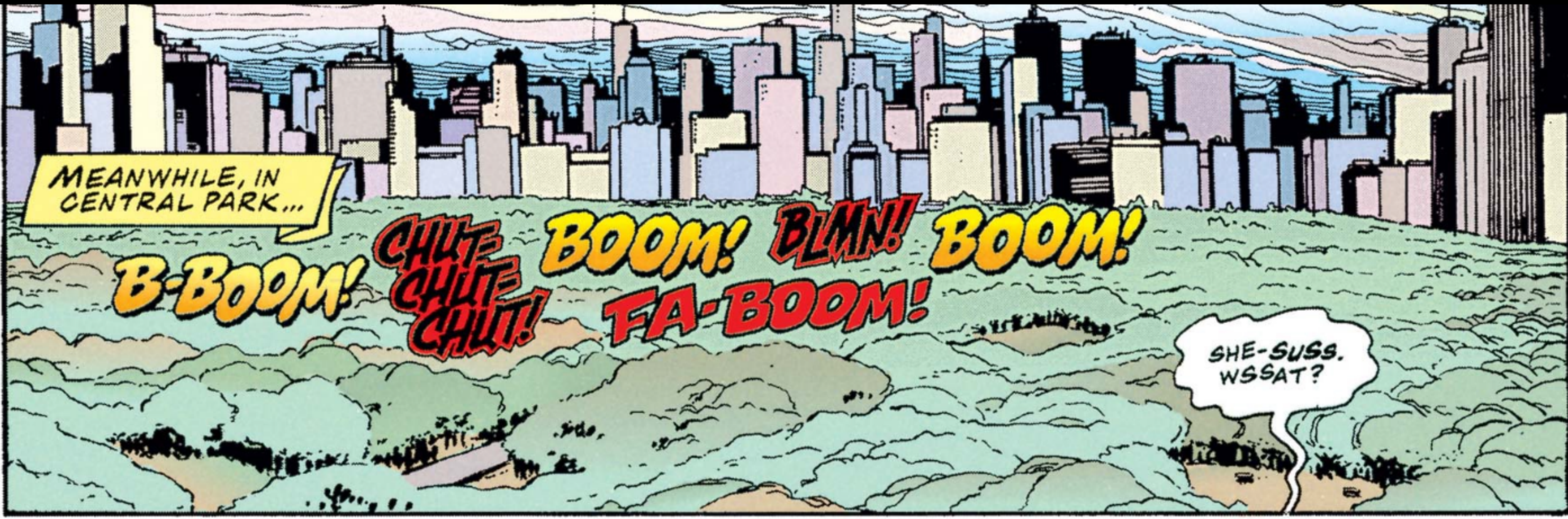
POLICE REPORTS AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLES CHRONICLED THE DEATH OF MARIA CASTLE AND HER TWO CHILDREN IN A MULTIPLE SLAYING WHICH TOOK PLACE IN NEW YORK'S CENTRAL PARK.

THE LONE SURVIVOR OF THAT FAMILY, FRANK CASTLE, WENT ON TO BECOME A VIGILANTE.

UP TO THIS POINT, THIS ENTIRE TRAGEDY HAS REMAINED SHROUDED IN MYSTERY. LITTLE HAS BEEN KNOWN AND LESS HAS BEEN REVEALED.

WITNESS NOW THE UNTOLD STORY, THE HERETOFORE UNREVEALED DETAILS CONCERNING THE DEATH OF AN AMERICAN FAMILY AND THE BIRTH OF ...

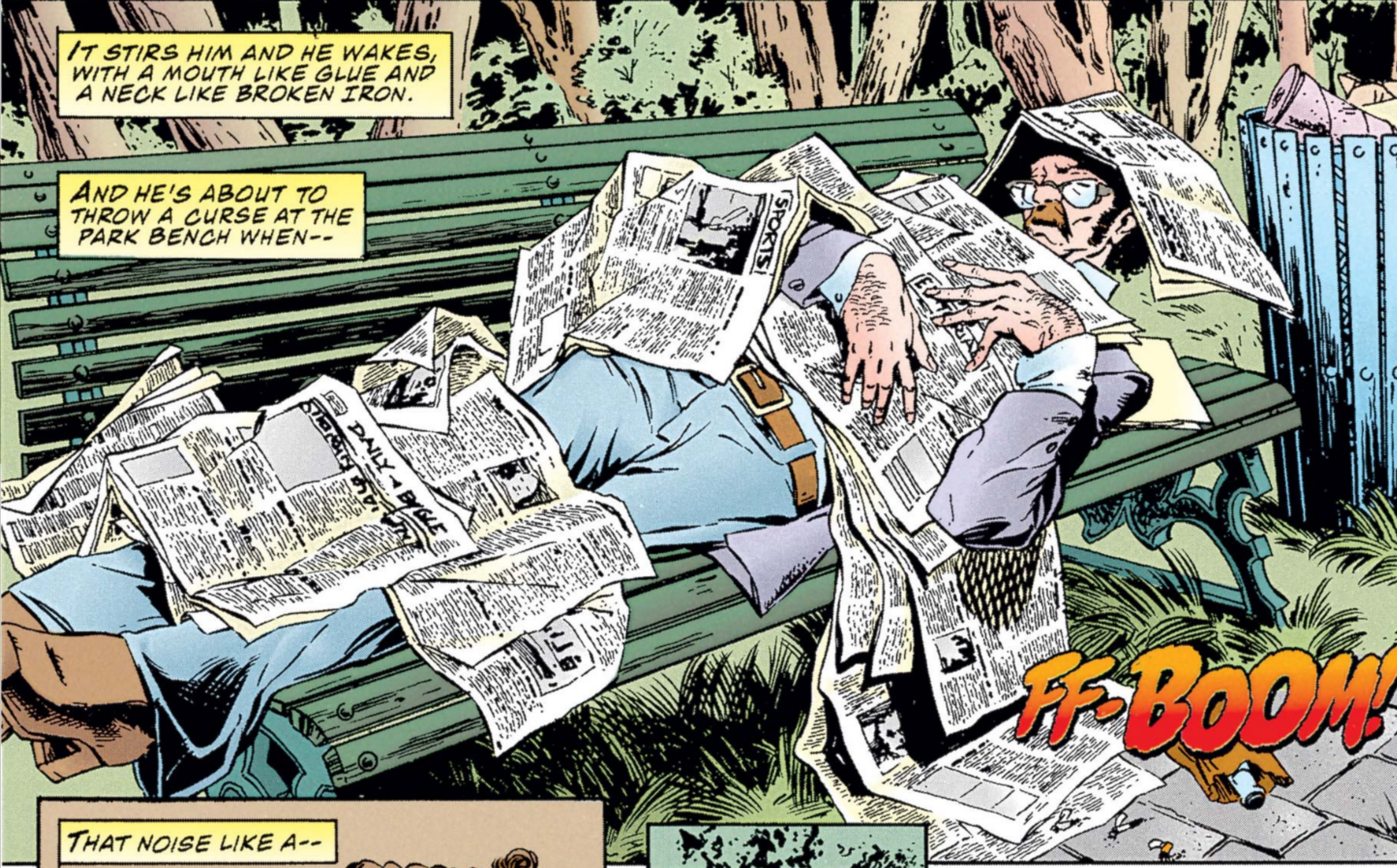




MEANWHILE, IN CENTRAL PARK...

B-BOOM! **CHIE CHIE CHIE!** **BOOM! BLMN! BOOM!** **FA-BOOM!**

SHE-SUSS. WSSAT?



IT STIRS HIM AND HE WAKES, WITH A MOUTH LIKE GLUE AND A NECK LIKE BROKEN IRON.

AND HE'S ABOUT TO THROW A CURSE AT THE PARK BENCH WHEN--

FF-BOOM!



THAT NOISE LIKE A--

--FIRE-CRACKER. SHE-SUSS! KIDS!

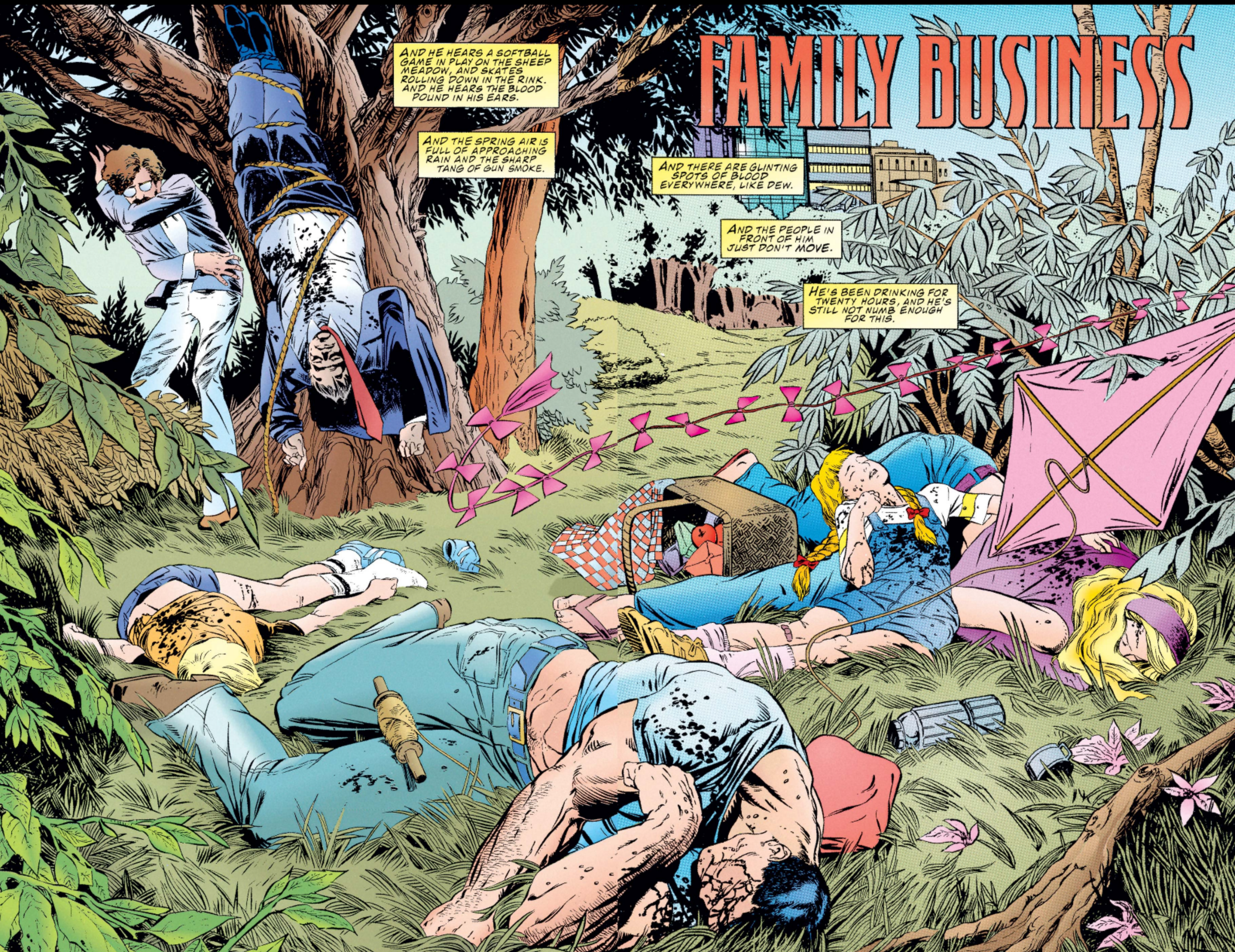
HE ROLLS TO HIS FEET AND FOLLOWS THE ECHO, WALKING LIKE AN AMATEUR WITH THE LIQUOR AS BALLAST...

...AND HE'S THINKING, I'LL KILL THEM FOR SCARING ME. I WAS JUST SLEEPING AND MINDING MY OWN.



...CURSING THE LOUSY KIDS AND THEIR NOISY GAMES...





FAMILY BUSINESS

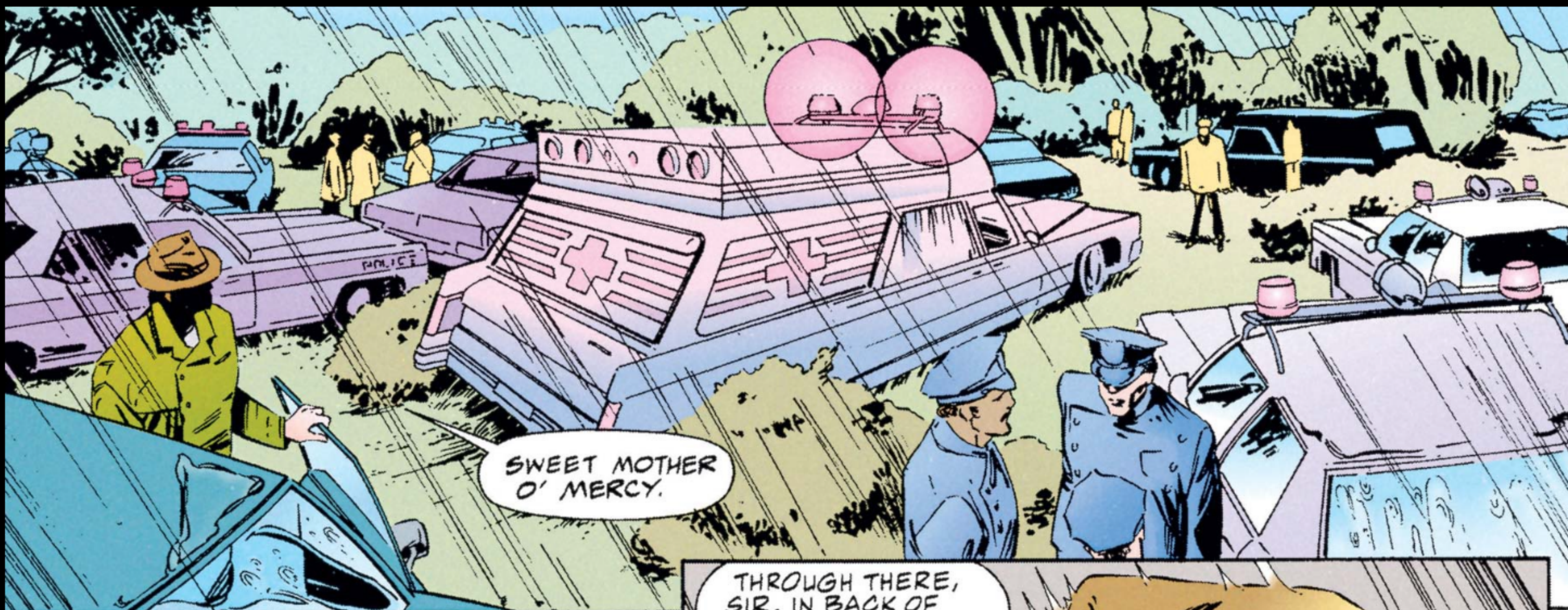
AND HE HEARS A SOFTBALL GAME IN PLAY ON THE SHEEP MEADOW, AND SKATES ROLLING DOWN IN THE RINK. AND HE HEARS THE BLOOD POUND IN HIS EARS.

AND THE SPRING AIR IS FULL OF APPROACHING RAIN AND THE SHARP TANG OF GUN SMOKE.

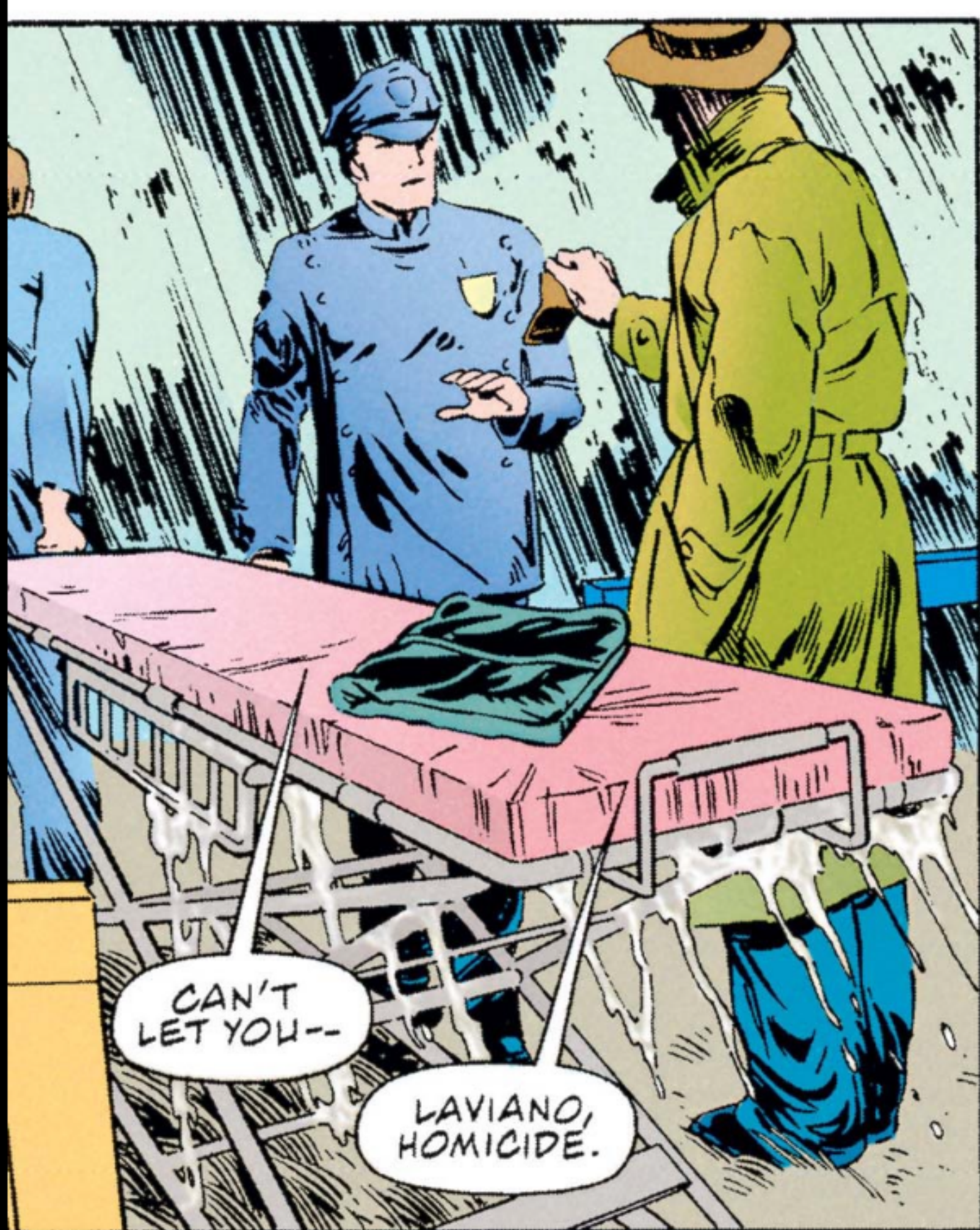
AND THERE ARE GLINTING SPOTS OF BLOOD EVERYWHERE, LIKE DEW.

AND THE PEOPLE IN FRONT OF HIM JUST DON'T MOVE.

HE'S BEEN DRINKING FOR TWENTY HOURS, AND HE'S STILL NOT NUMB ENOUGH FOR THIS.



SWEET MOTHER
O' MERCY.



CAN'T
LET YOU--

LAVIANO,
HOMICIDE.



THROUGH THERE,
SIR. IN BACK OF
THE BUSHES. LOOKS
LIKE MURDER.

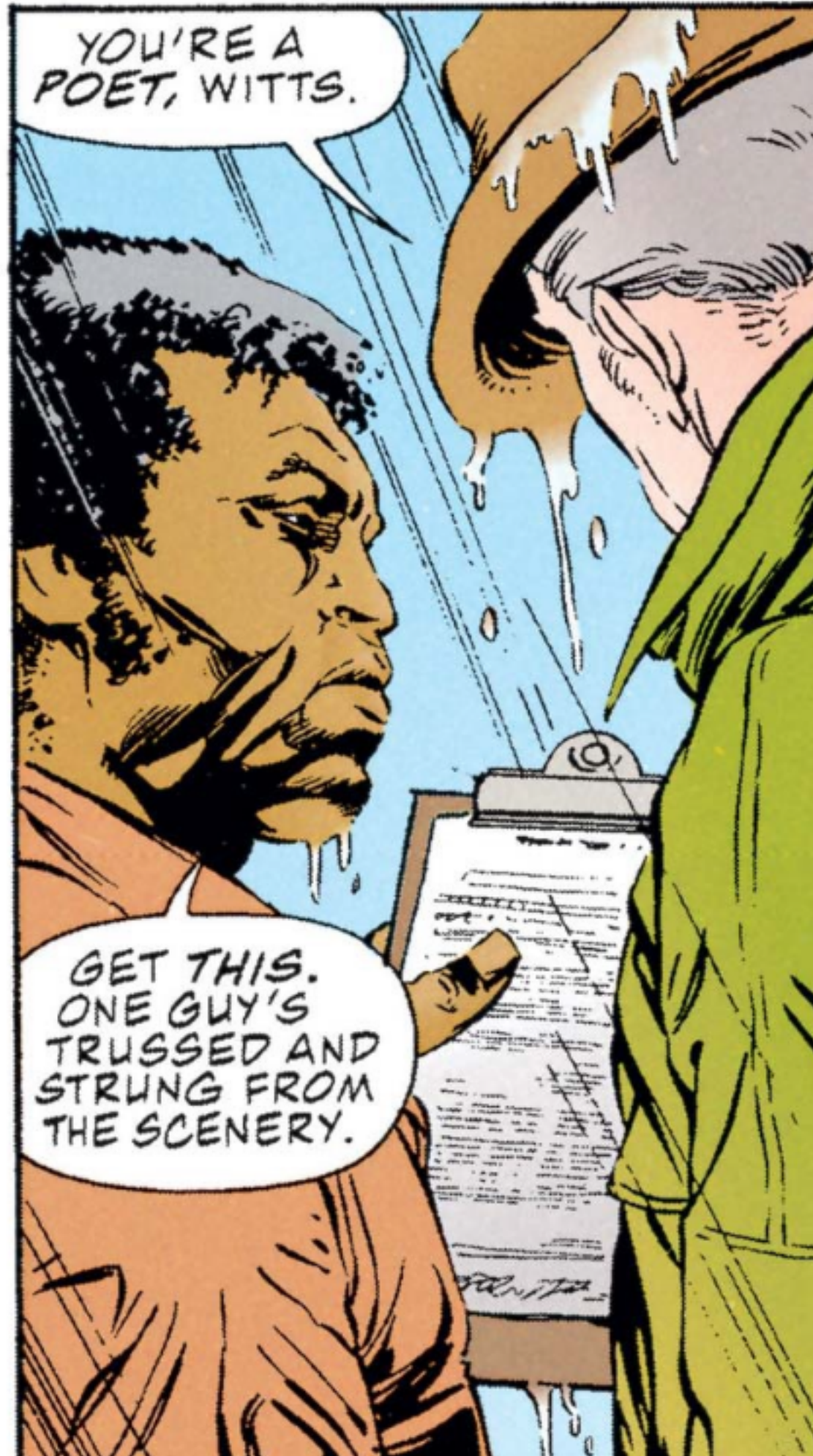
DO TELL.



WHAT'S ON
THE MENU TODAY,
STAN?

HI, JOHNNY.
IT'S A RIPE
ONE.

WE HAVE FIVE,
REPEAT, FIVE STIFFS,
ALL SO FULL OF BULLETS,
THEY RATTLE WHEN
YOU MOVE 'EM.



YOU'RE A
POET, WITTS.

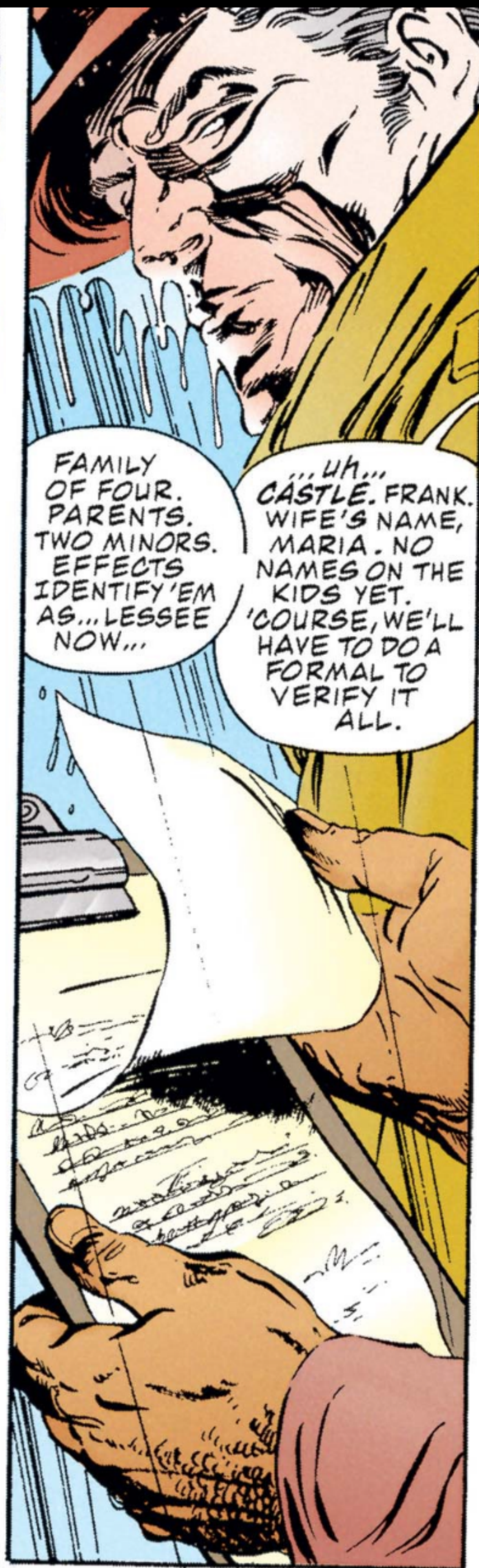
GET THIS.
ONE GUY'S
TRUSSED AND
STRUNG FROM
THE SCENERY.



EXECUTION, HUH?

HE SURE DIDN'T HANG HIMSELF UP THERE. FIGURE THE REST OF 'EM JUST HAPPENED BY. WRONG PLACE, WRONG TIME.

REST OF THEM?

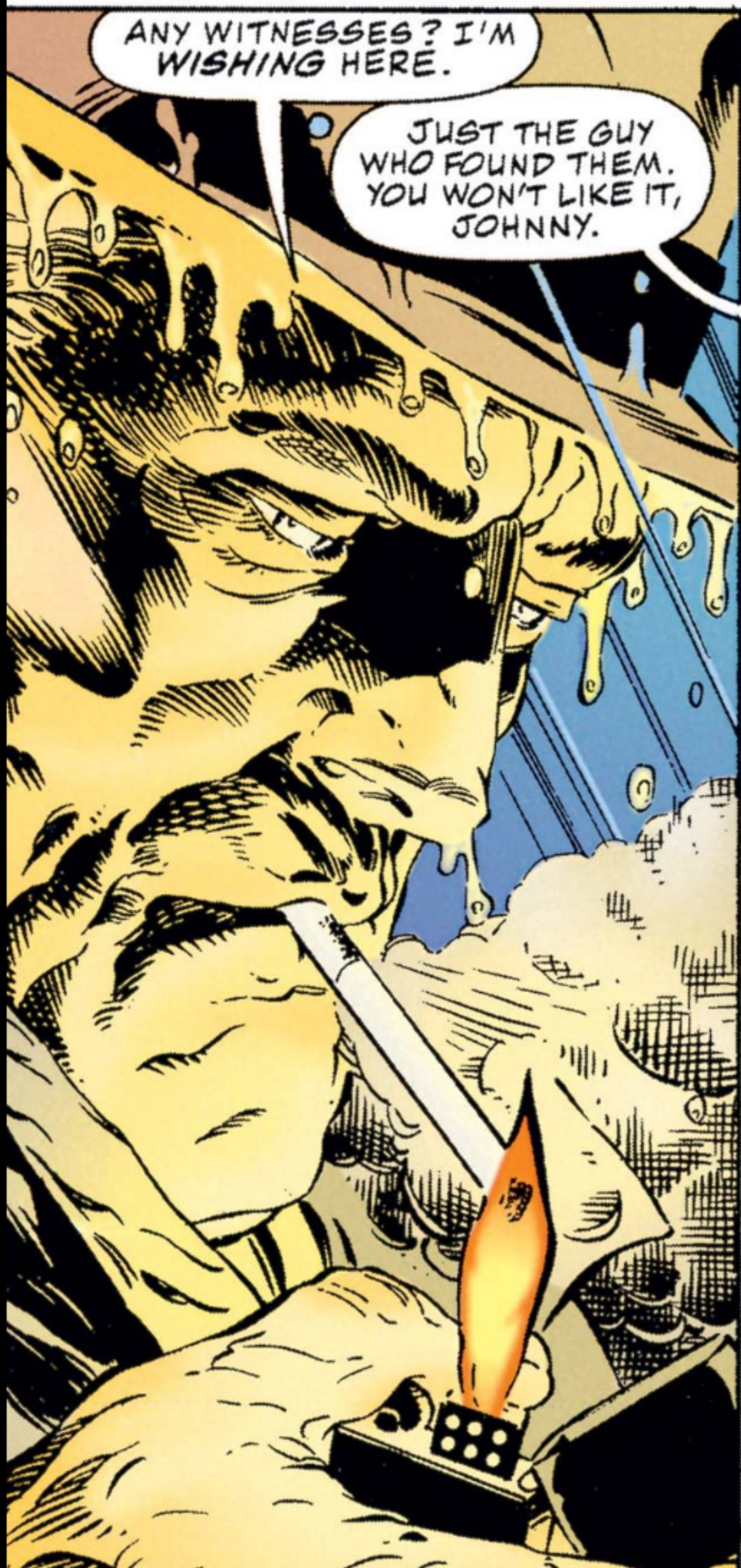


FAMILY OF FOUR. PARENTS. TWO MINORS. EFFECTS IDENTIFY 'EM AS... LESSEE NOW...

...UH... CASTLE. FRANK. WIFE'S NAME, MARIA. NO NAMES ON THE KIDS YET. 'COURSE, WE'LL HAVE TO DO A FORMAL TO VERIFY IT ALL.



SWEET MOTHER OF MERCY A FAMILY...



ANY WITNESSES? I'M WISHING HERE.

JUST THE GUY WHO FOUND THEM. YOU WON'T LIKE IT, JOHNNY.



WHY NOT? OH, \$%*%!

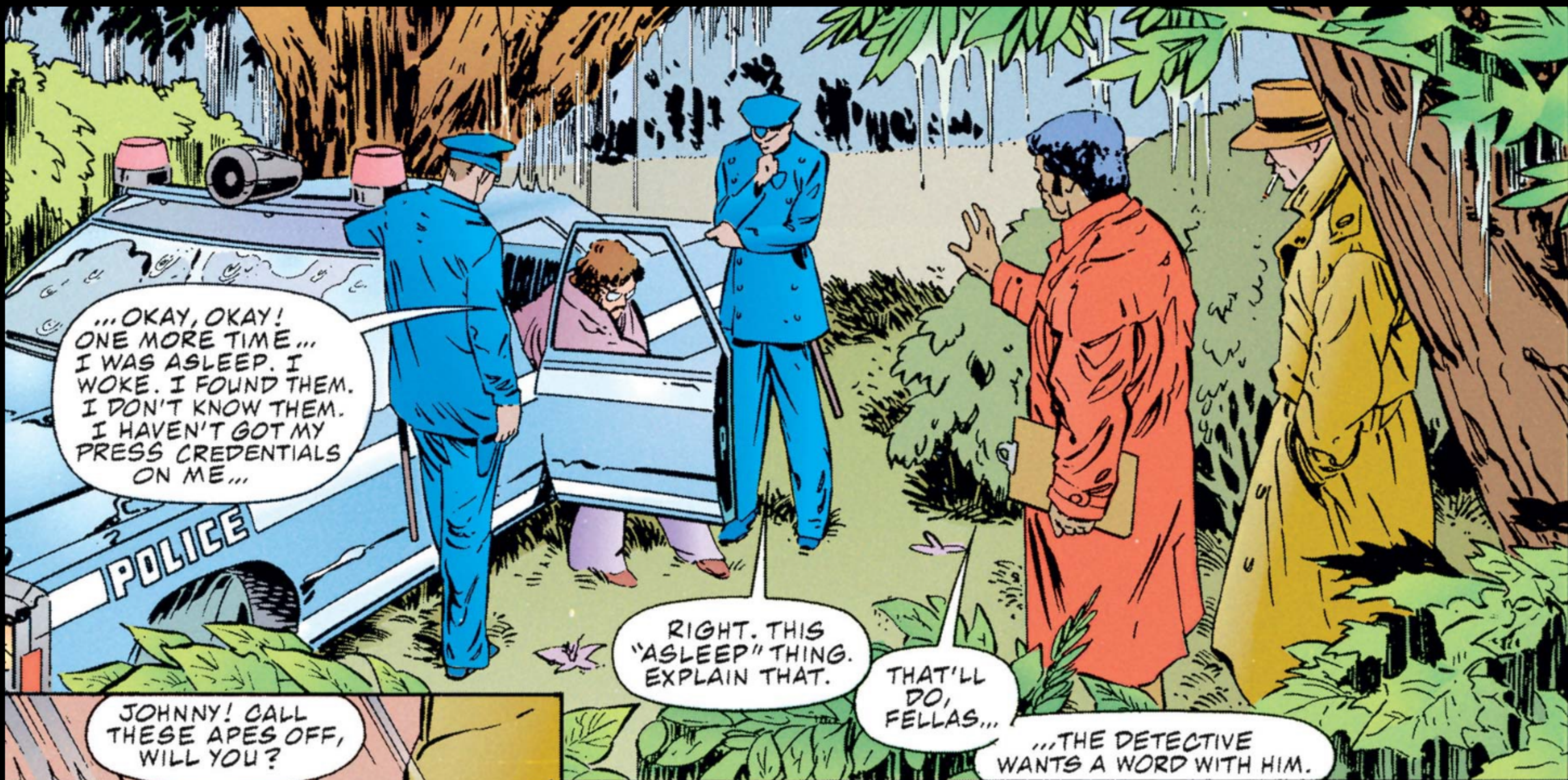


MCTEER? THAT LOSER?!?

YOU TWO NEVER MADE UP, I GUESS.

NEVER WILL. TWO THINGS I HATE, STAN... AMORAL HACKS AND STINKING DRUNKS.

MISTER MCTEER IS BOTH OF THEM.

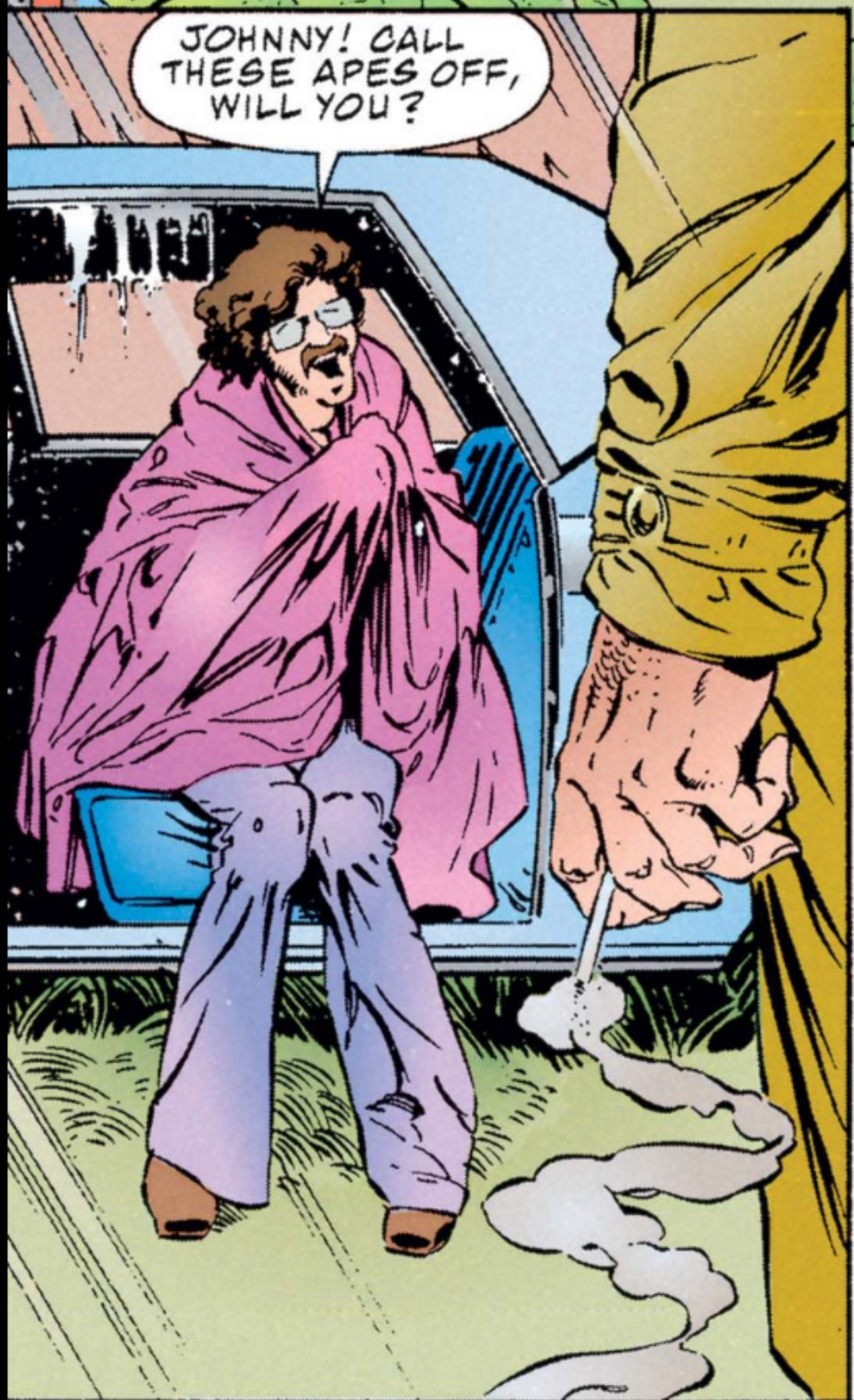


...OKAY, OKAY!
ONE MORE TIME...
I WAS ASLEEP. I
WOKE. I FOUND THEM.
I DON'T KNOW THEM.
I HAVEN'T GOT MY
PRESS CREDENTIALS
ON ME...

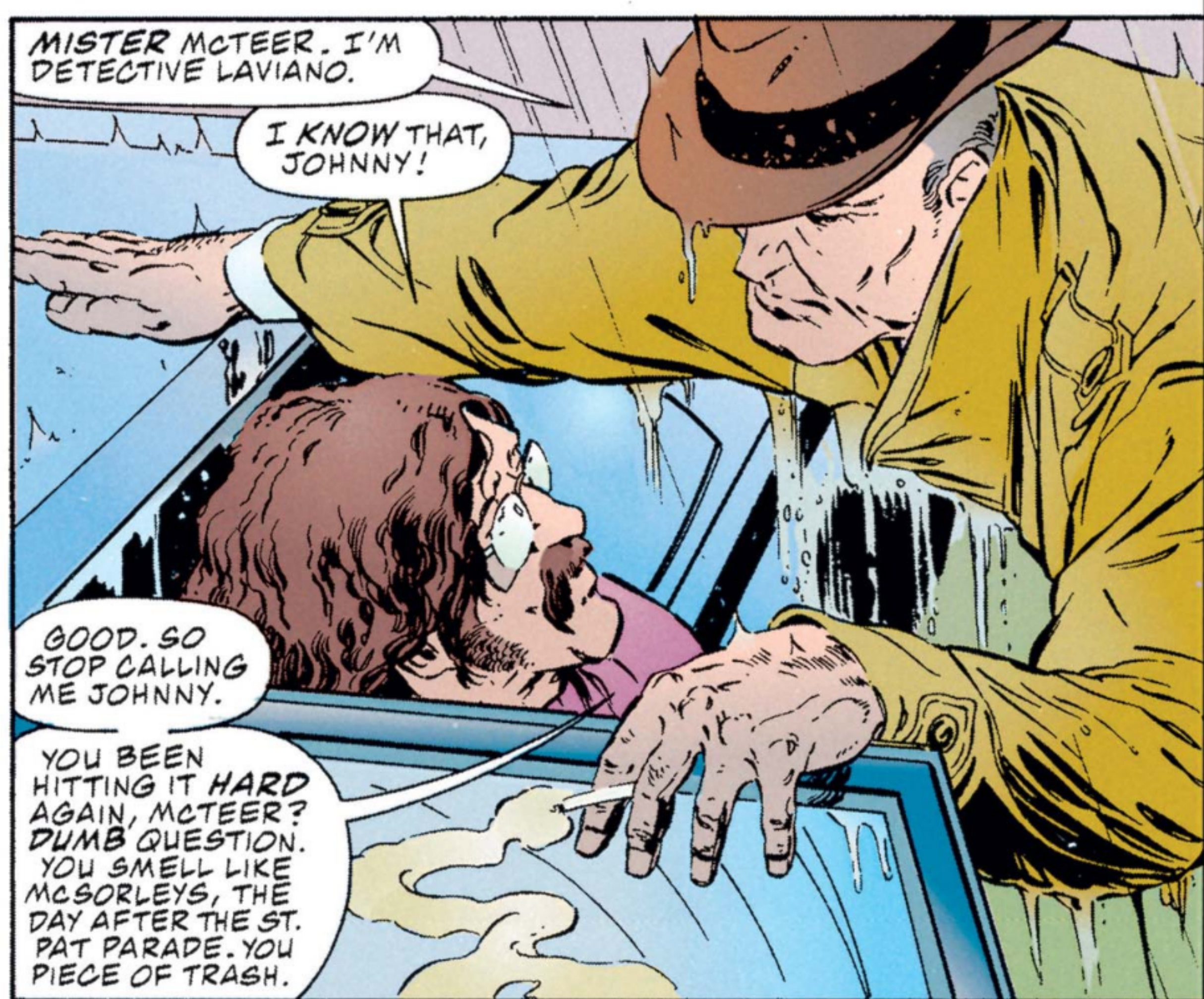
RIGHT. THIS
"ASLEEP" THING.
EXPLAIN THAT.

THAT'LL
DO,
FELLAS...

...THE DETECTIVE
WANTS A WORD WITH HIM.



JOHNNY! CALL
THESE APES OFF,
WILL YOU?



MISTER MCTEER. I'M
DETECTIVE LAVIANO.

I KNOW THAT,
JOHNNY!

GOOD. SO
STOP CALLING
ME JOHNNY.

YOU BEEN
HITTING IT HARD
AGAIN, MCTEER?
DUMB QUESTION.
YOU SMELL LIKE
MCSORLEYS, THE
DAY AFTER THE ST.
PAT PARADE. YOU
PIECE OF TRASH.



YOU CAN'T...

...I MEAN...

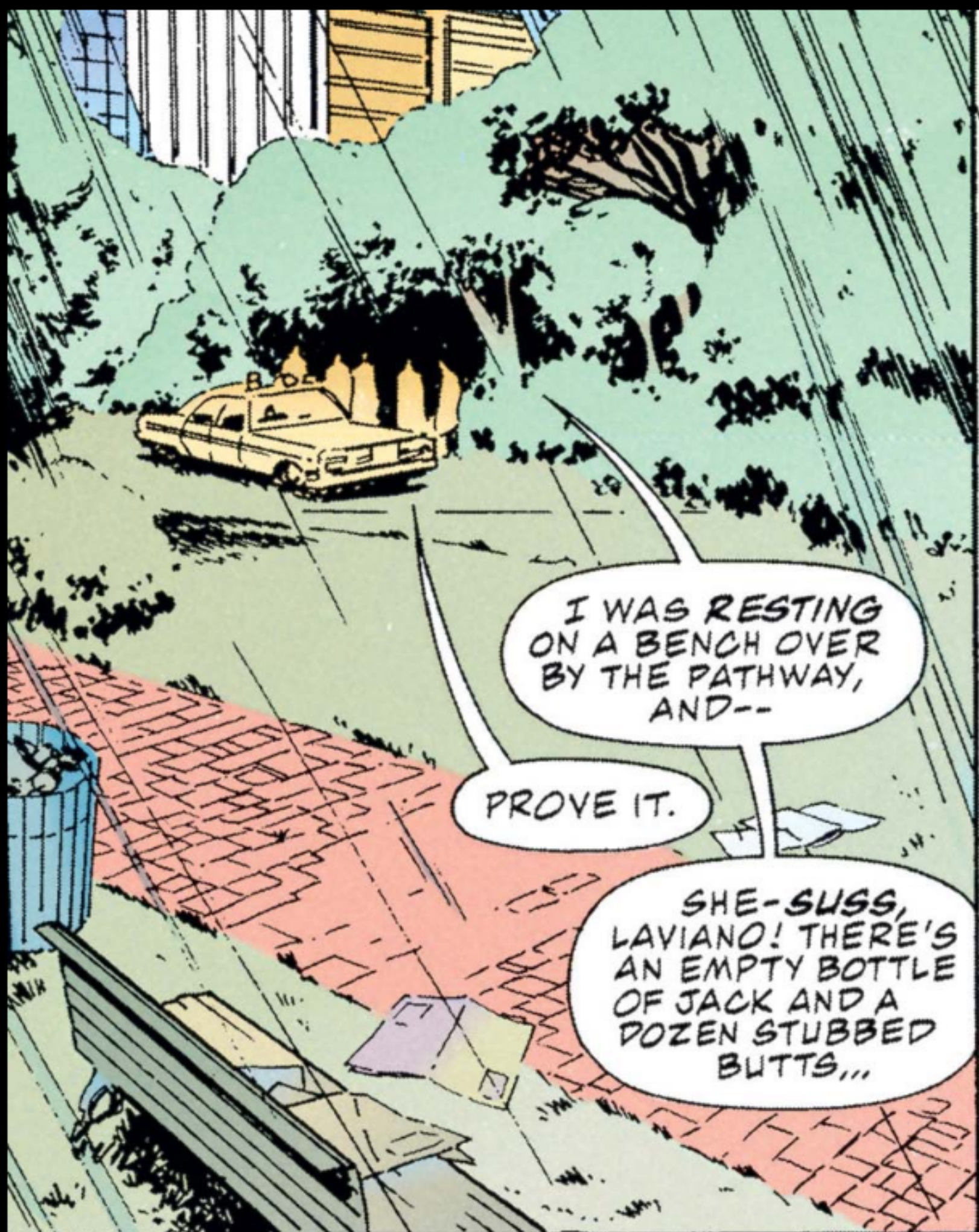
...TALK
TO ME LIKE
THAT...

...I'M IN
SHOCK, JOH--
DETECTIVE. I'M
TRAUMATIZED.



MY HEART
BLEEDS.

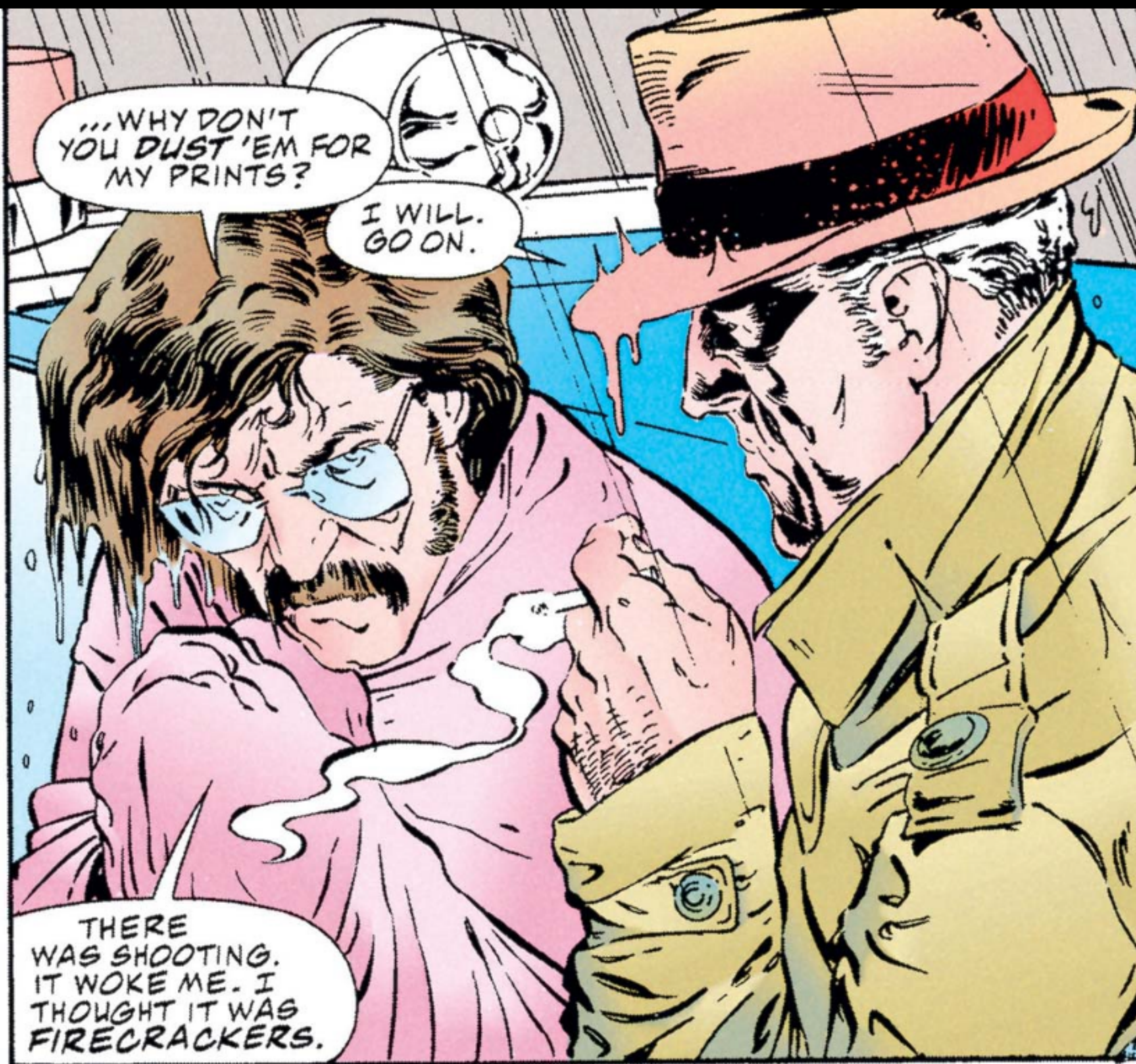
I'VE GOT
FIVE DEAD, TWO
OF THEM KIDS.
I DON'T GIVE A
\$\$\$\$\$ ABOUT YOU.
JUST TALK.



I WAS RESTING
ON A BENCH OVER
BY THE PATHWAY,
AND--

PROVE IT.

SHE-SUSS,
LAVIANO! THERE'S
AN EMPTY BOTTLE
OF JACK AND A
DOZEN STUBBED
BUTTS...



...WHY DON'T
YOU DUST 'EM FOR
MY PRINTS?

I WILL.
GO ON.

THERE
WAS SHOOTING.
IT WOKE ME. I
THOUGHT IT WAS
FIRECRACKERS.



I CAME THROUGH
THE BUSHES. CHECK
OUT MY SHOES. MUD,
OKAY? I CAME
THROUGH AND--

HEY! OVER
HERE! HEY!



RENALDI--
WHAT IS IT?

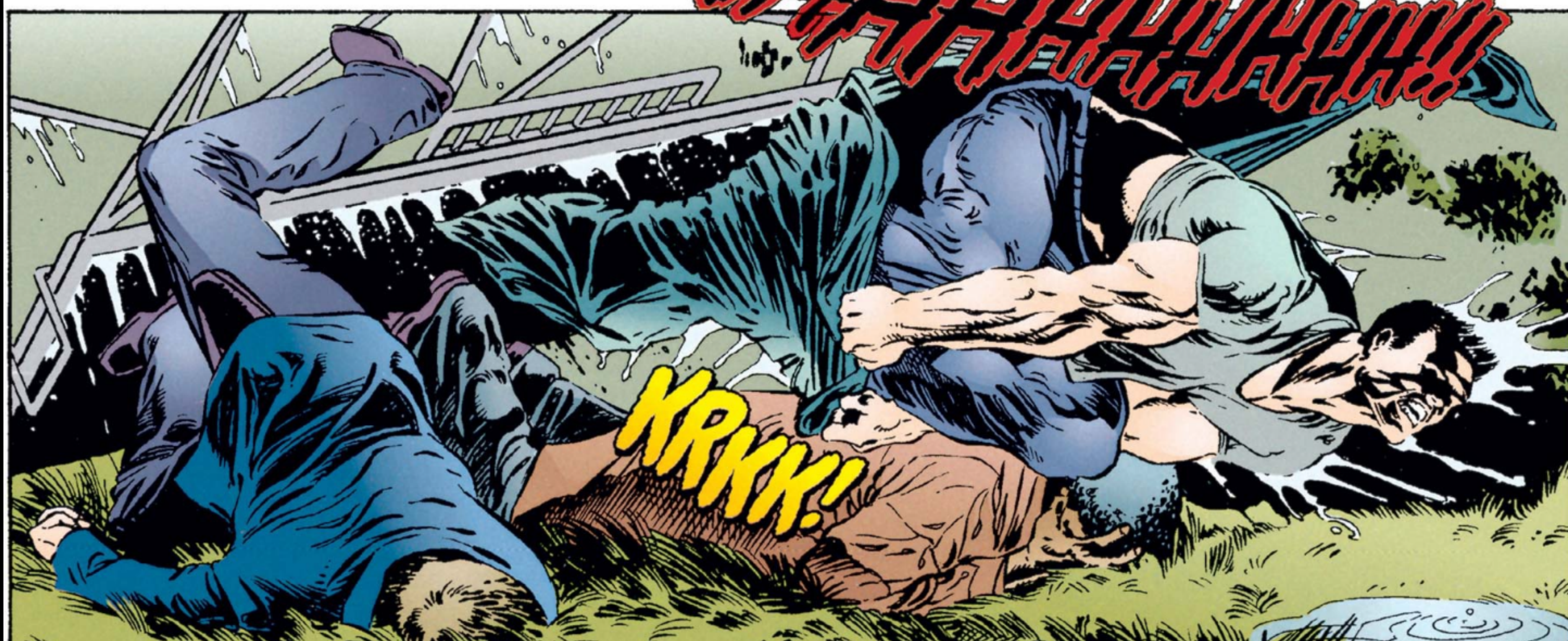
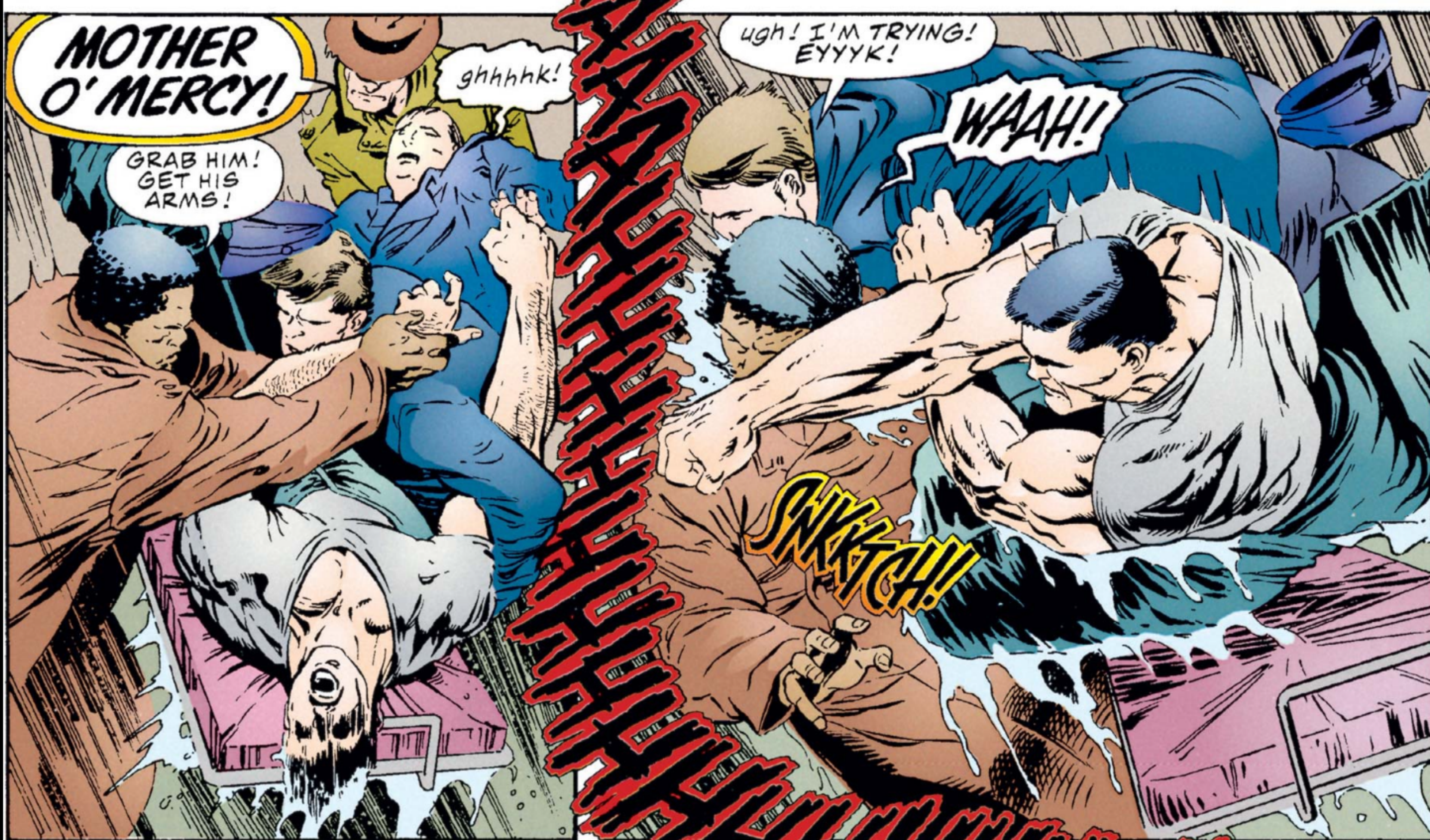
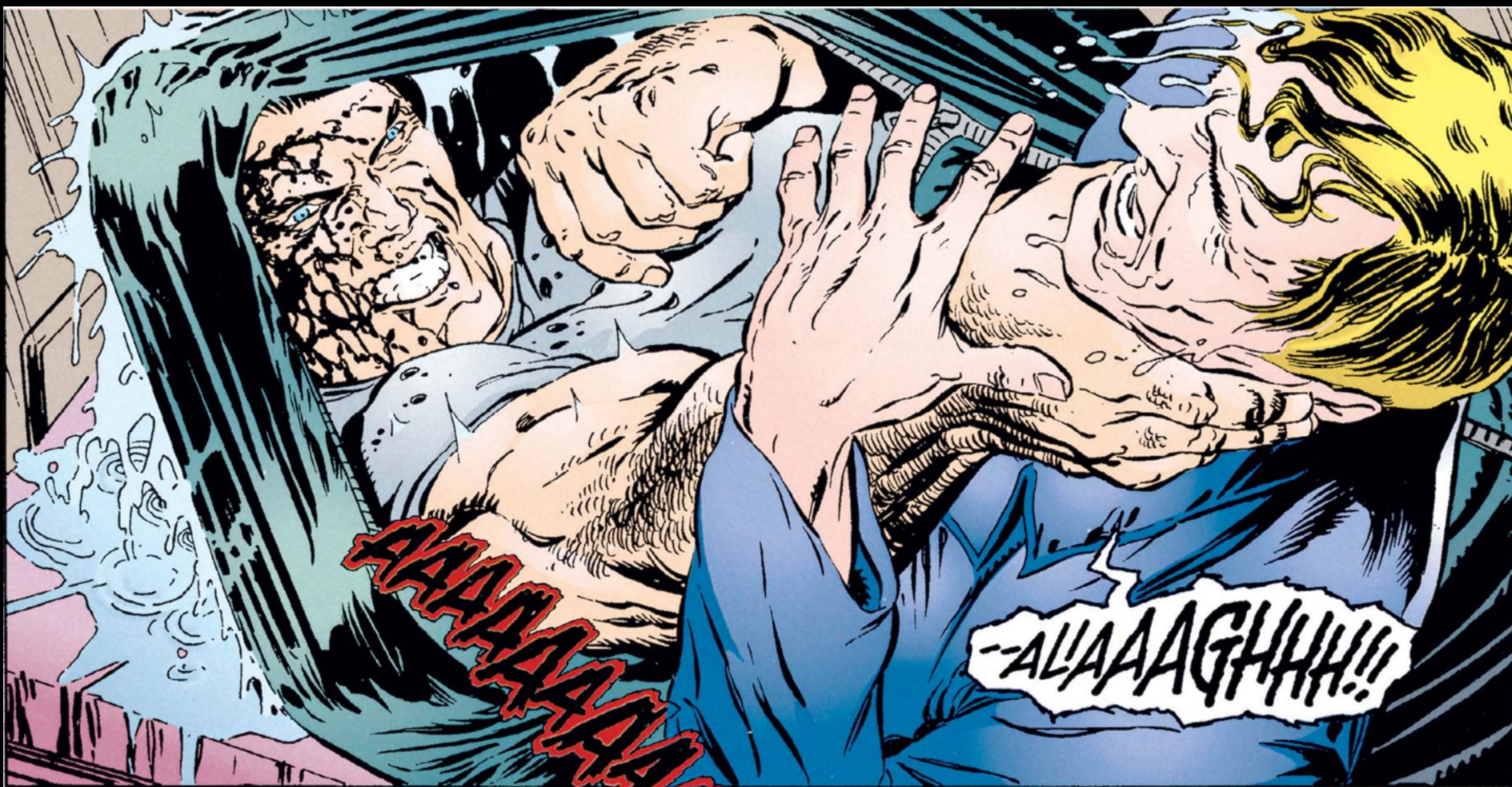
TAKE A LOOK
AT THIS!

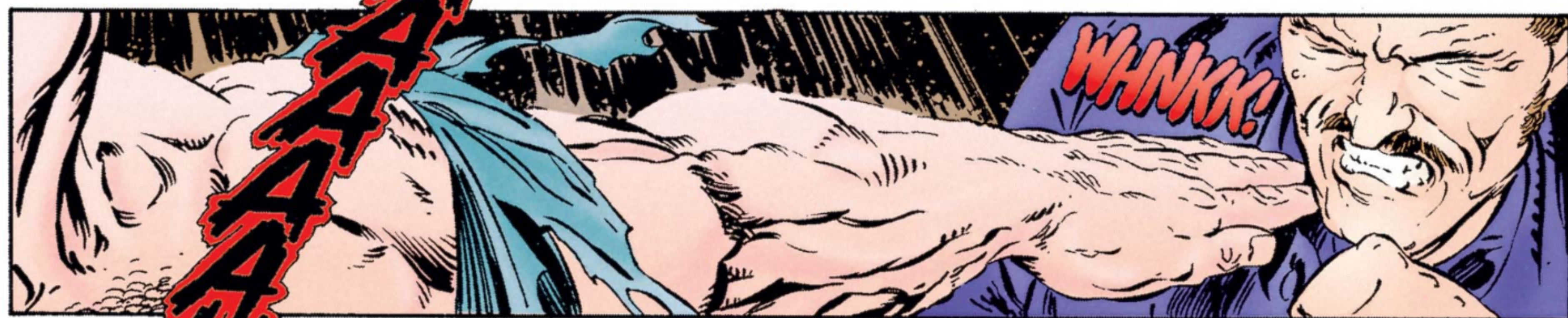


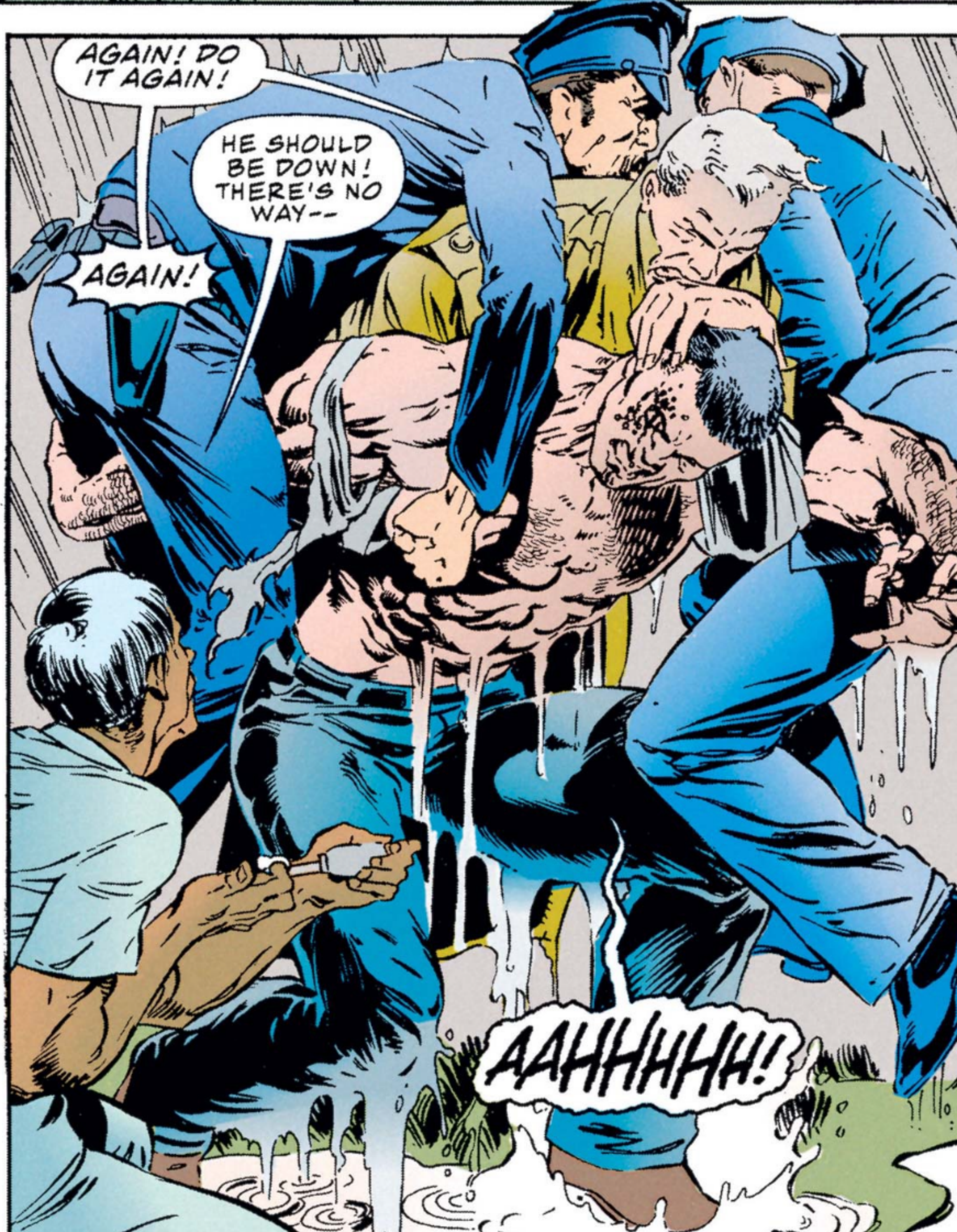
WHAT
HAVE YOU GOT,
RENALDI?

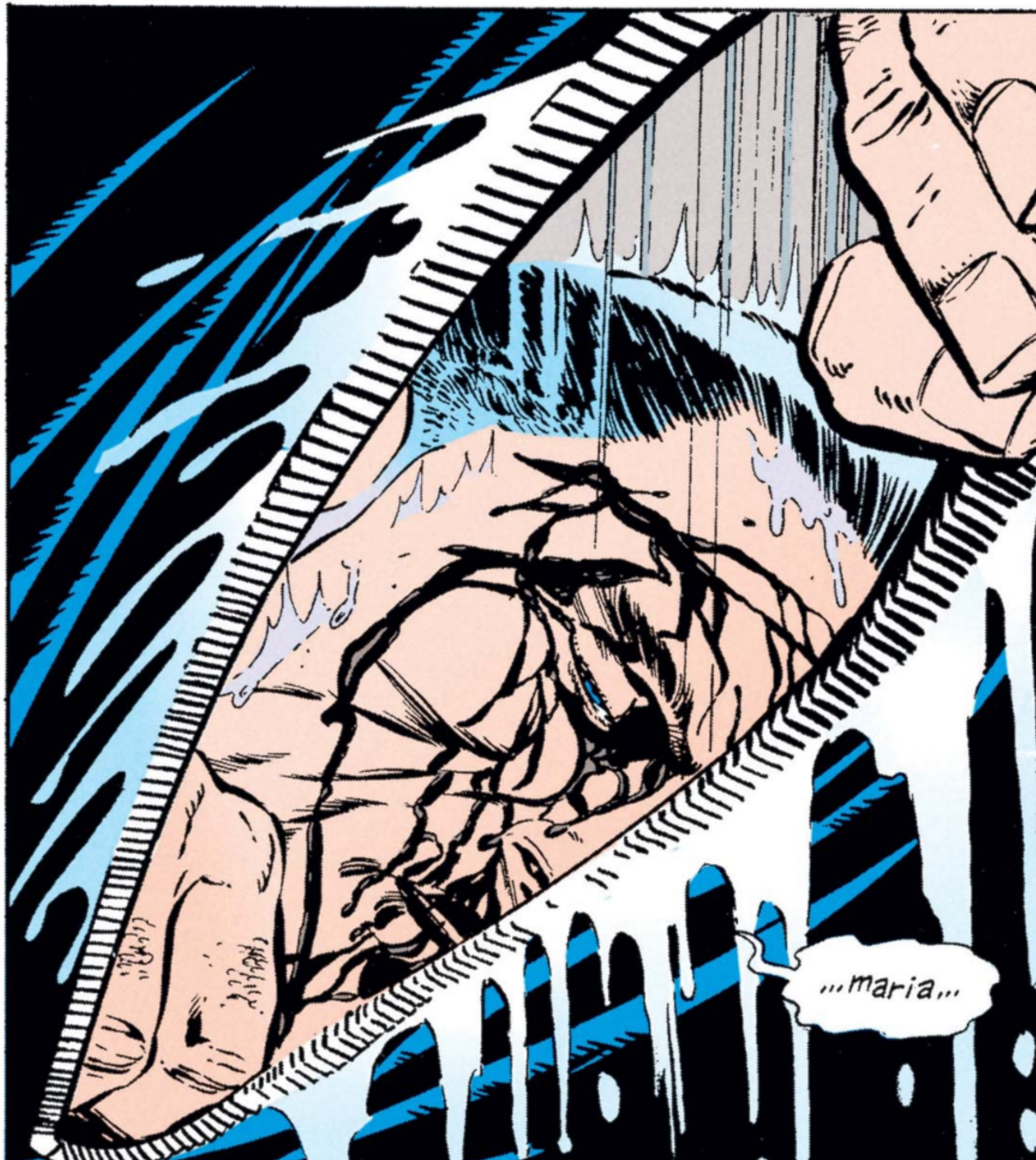
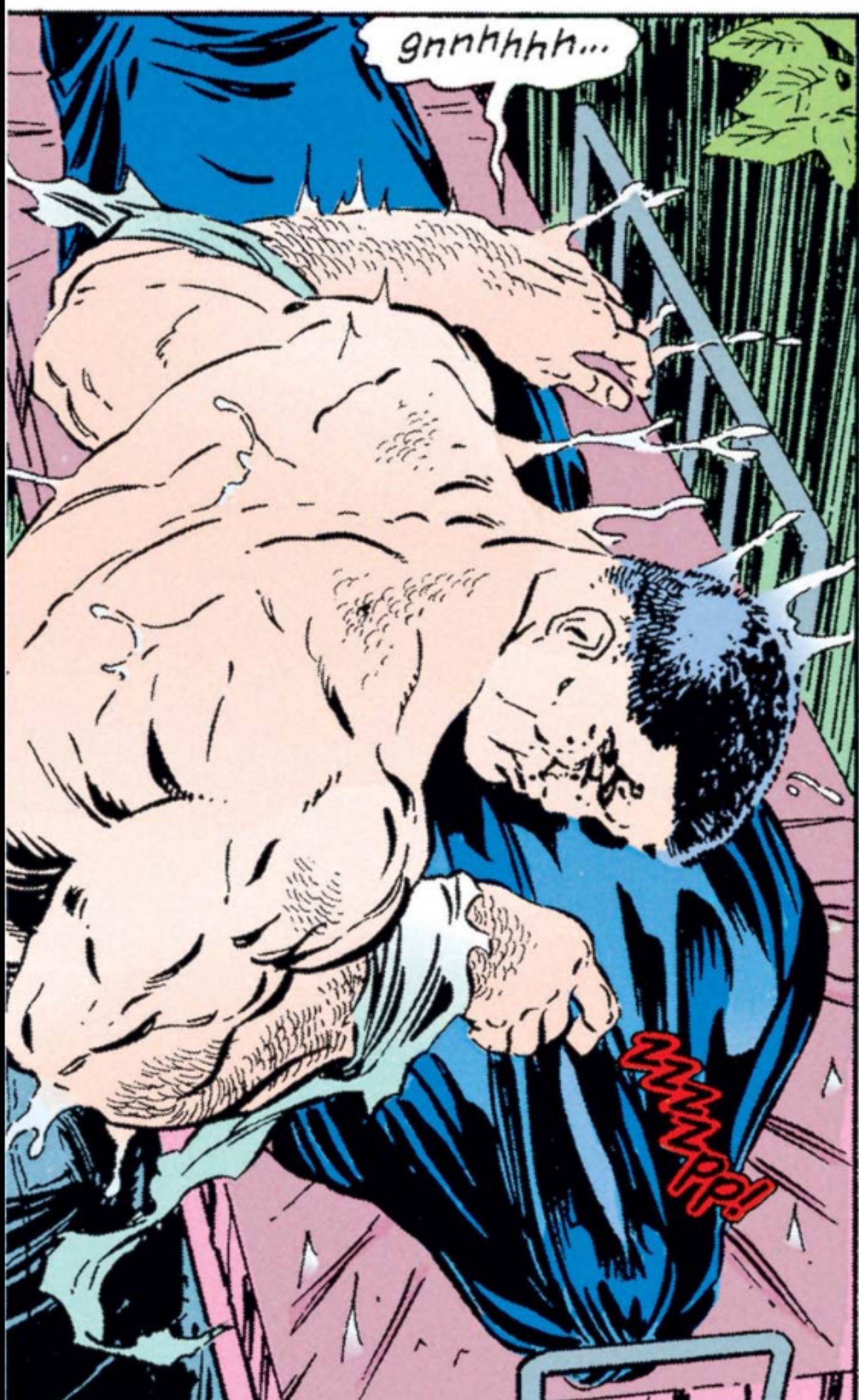
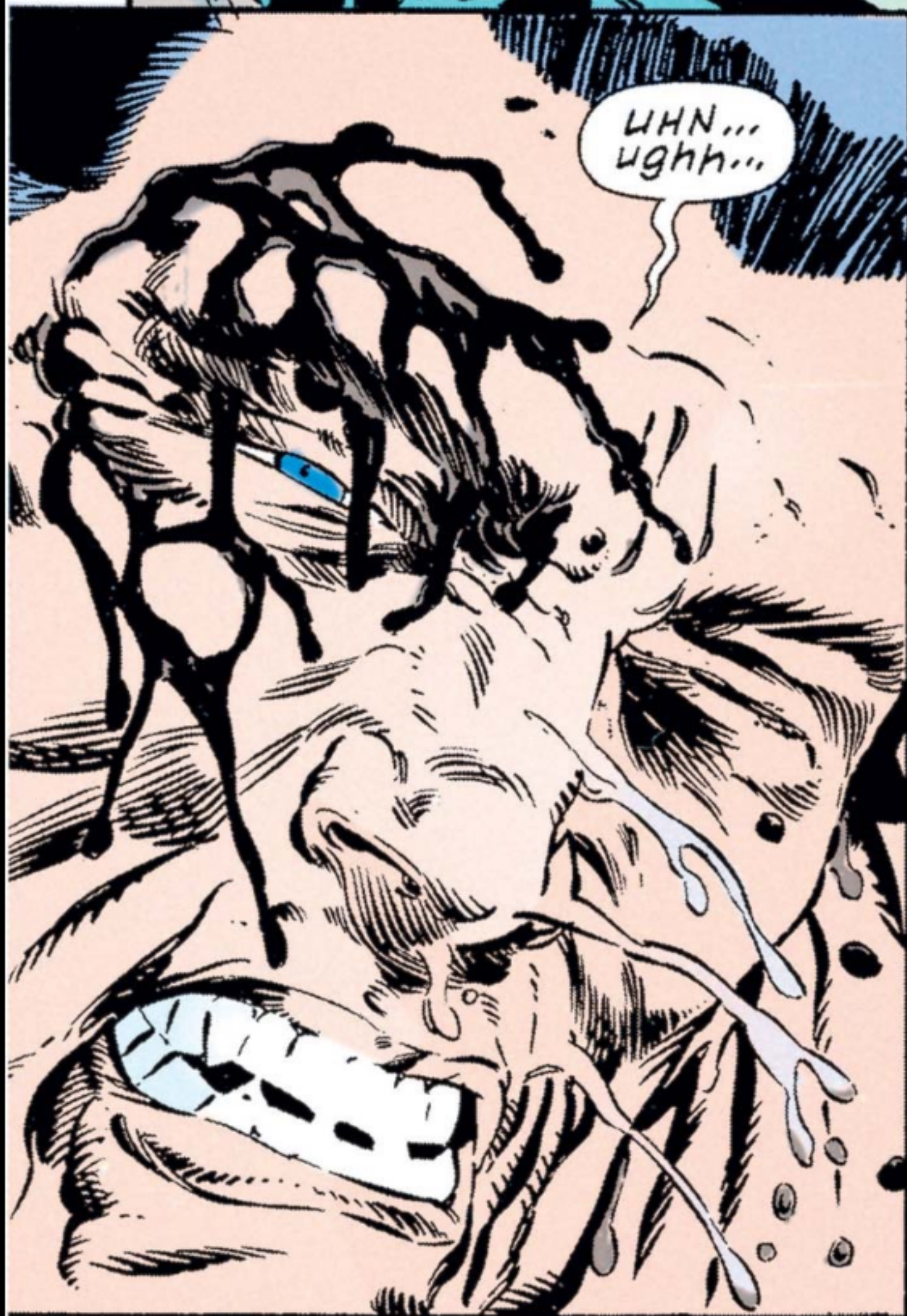
WHAT
I'VE GOT IS
A PULSE!
THIS ONE'S
STILL--









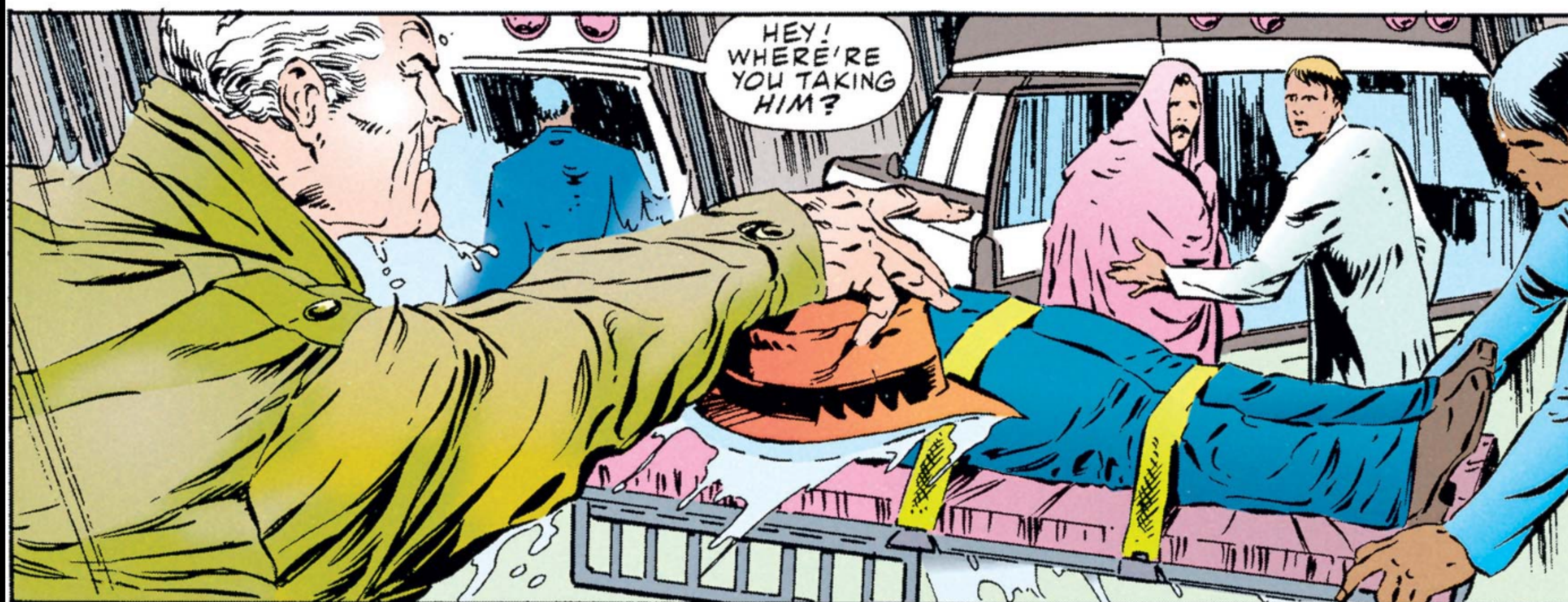




COME ON!
COME ON SWEET
MOTHER O' MERCY,
THIS IS A DISGRACE!
GET THIS GUY TO MT.
SINAI NOW!

WITTS?

I'LL
LIVE.



HEY!
WHERE'RE
YOU TAKING
HIM?



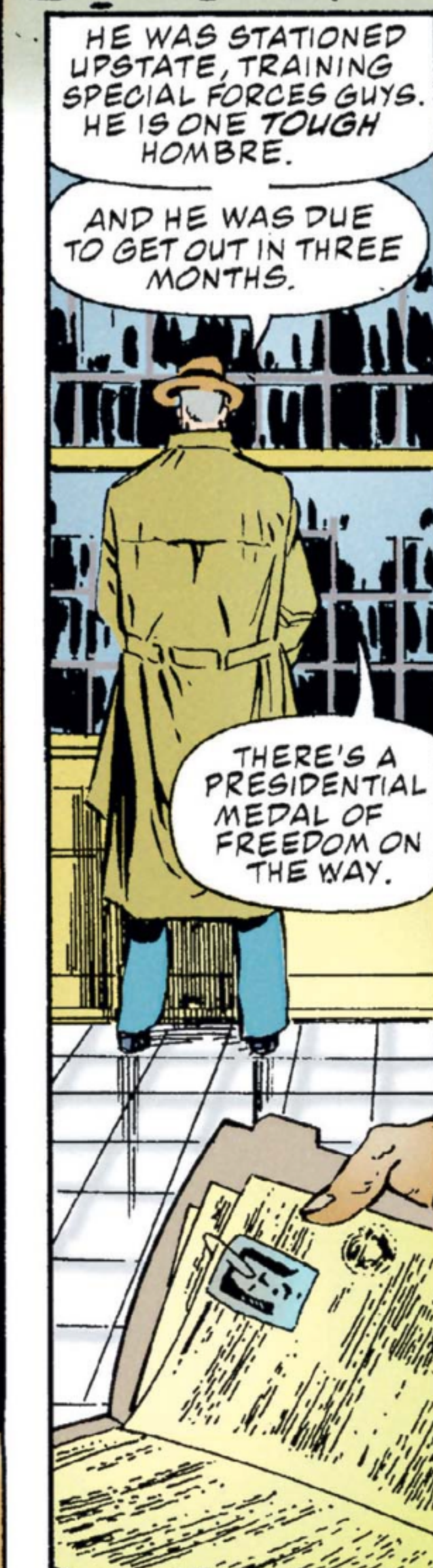
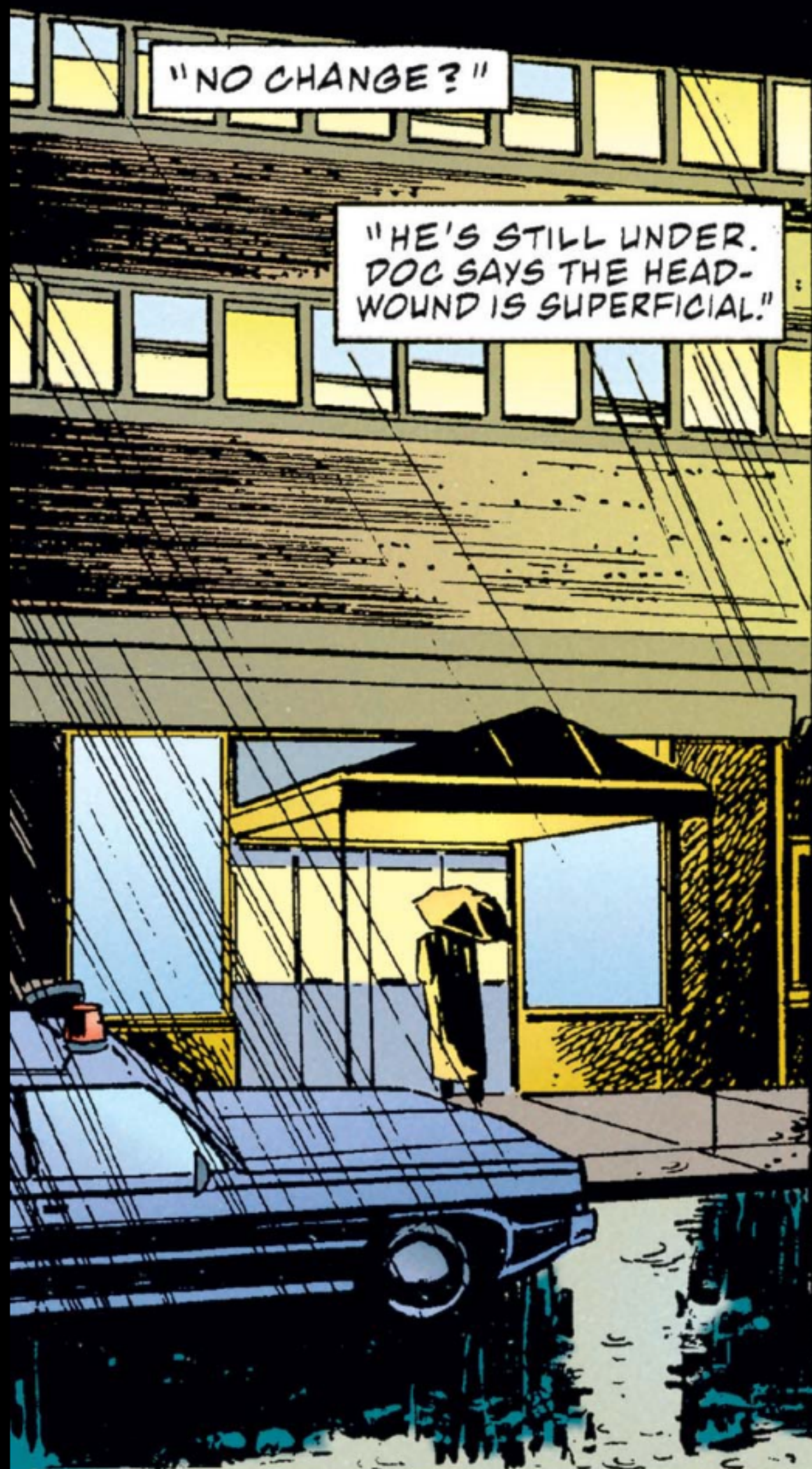
I NEED TREATMENT,
TOO, JOHNNY! LOOK
AT THIS! LOOK WHAT
HE DID!

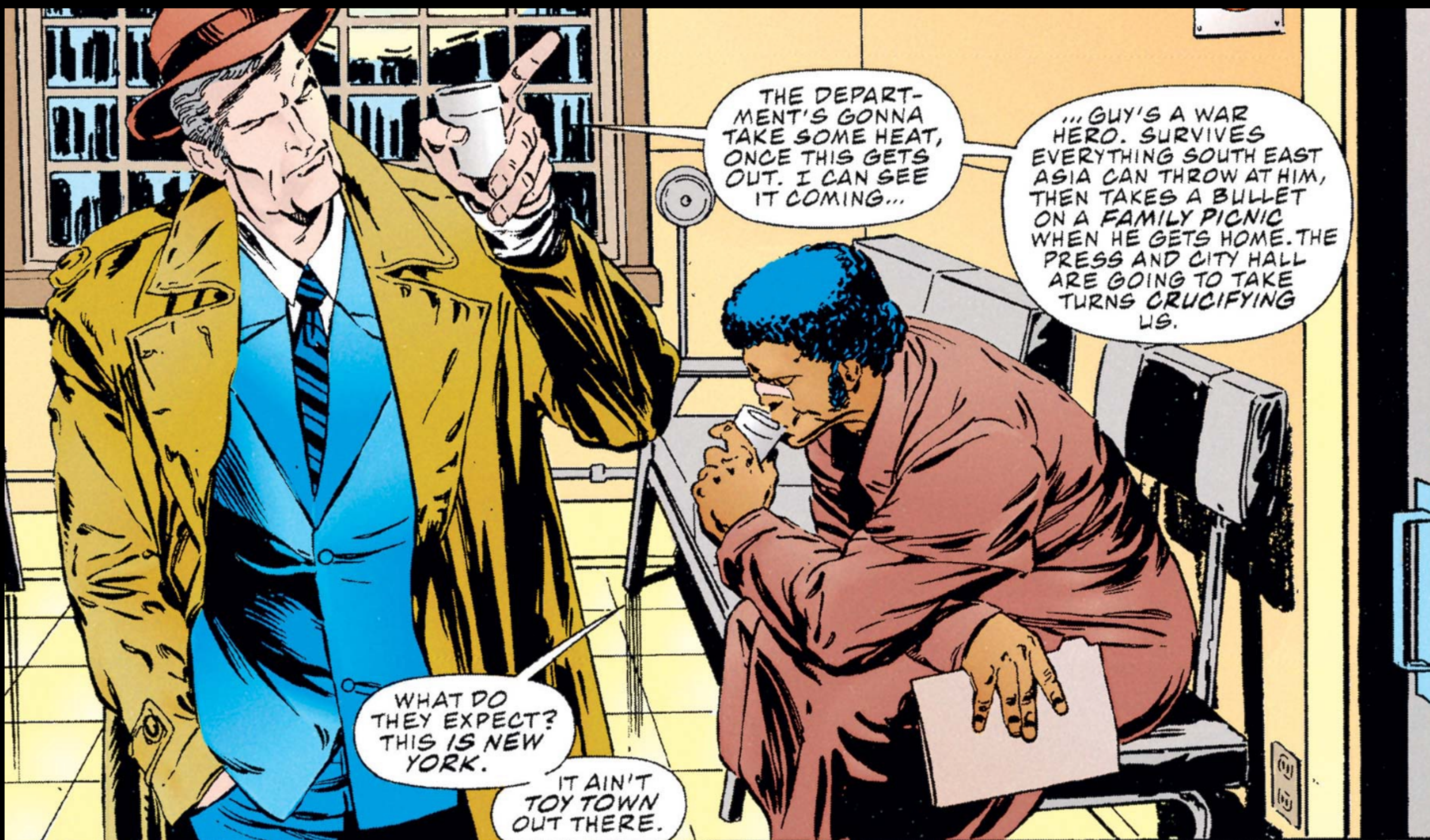
AND OF COURSE YOU'D
LOVE TO BE THERE WHEN HE
WAKES UP SO YOU CAN
SCOOP AN INTERVIEW.

WHAT DO
YOU THINK I AM,
DETECTIVE?



A WASHED-UP
CREEP WHO'LL DO
ANYTHING FOR A
STORY--THAT ANSWER
YOUR QUESTION?





THE DEPARTMENT'S GONNA TAKE SOME HEAT, ONCE THIS GETS OUT. I CAN SEE IT COMING...

... GUY'S A WAR HERO. SURVIVES EVERYTHING SOUTH EAST ASIA CAN THROW AT HIM, THEN TAKES A BULLET ON A FAMILY PICNIC WHEN HE GETS HOME. THE PRESS AND CITY HALL ARE GOING TO TAKE TURNS CRUCIFYING US.

WHAT DO THEY EXPECT? THIS IS NEW YORK.

IT AIN'T TOY TOWN OUT THERE.



BETTER GET RESULTS ON THIS REAL QUICK.

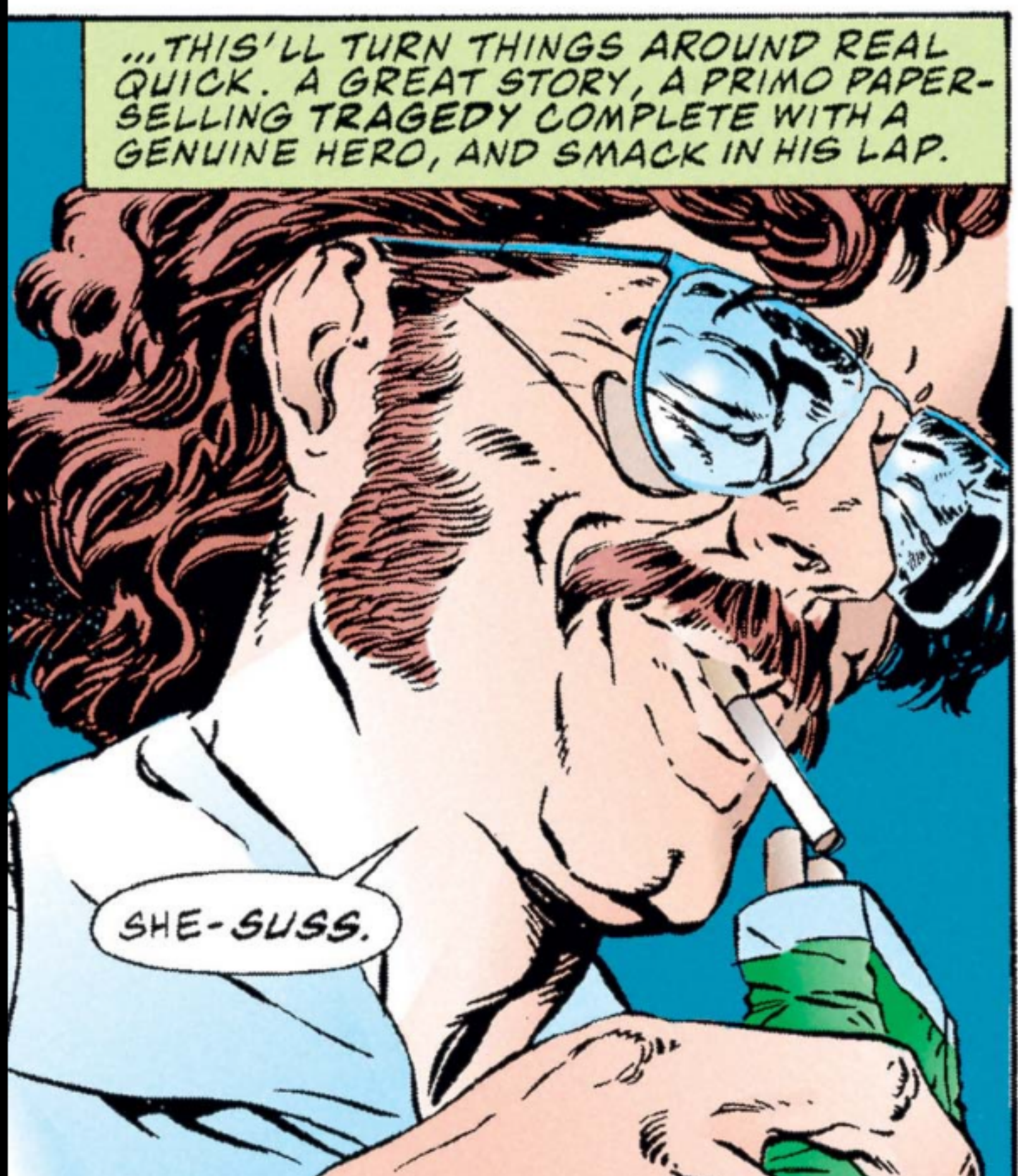
AND I WANT THE PAPERS KEPT QUIET AS LONG AS POSSIBLE...



... I'M GONNA FIND THAT RATFINK MCETER AND SLAP A GAG ON HIM. SWEET MOTHER OF MERCY... OF ALL THE PEOPLE TO HAVE FOUND THEM.

HE HEARS LAVIANO AND HE GRINS. THERE IS A GOD, HE THINKS, AND HE'S SMILING DOWN ON ME.

HE HASN'T SOLD A DECENT STORY IN FOUR MONTHS, BUT THIS ONE... THIS ONE...



...THIS'LL TURN THINGS AROUND REAL QUICK. A GREAT STORY, A PRIMO PAPER-SELLING TRAGEDY COMPLETE WITH A GENUINE HERO, AND SMACK IN HIS LAP.

SHE-SUSS.



JAMESON'S GONNA WANT TO HAVE MY BABIES. I'LL BE A--

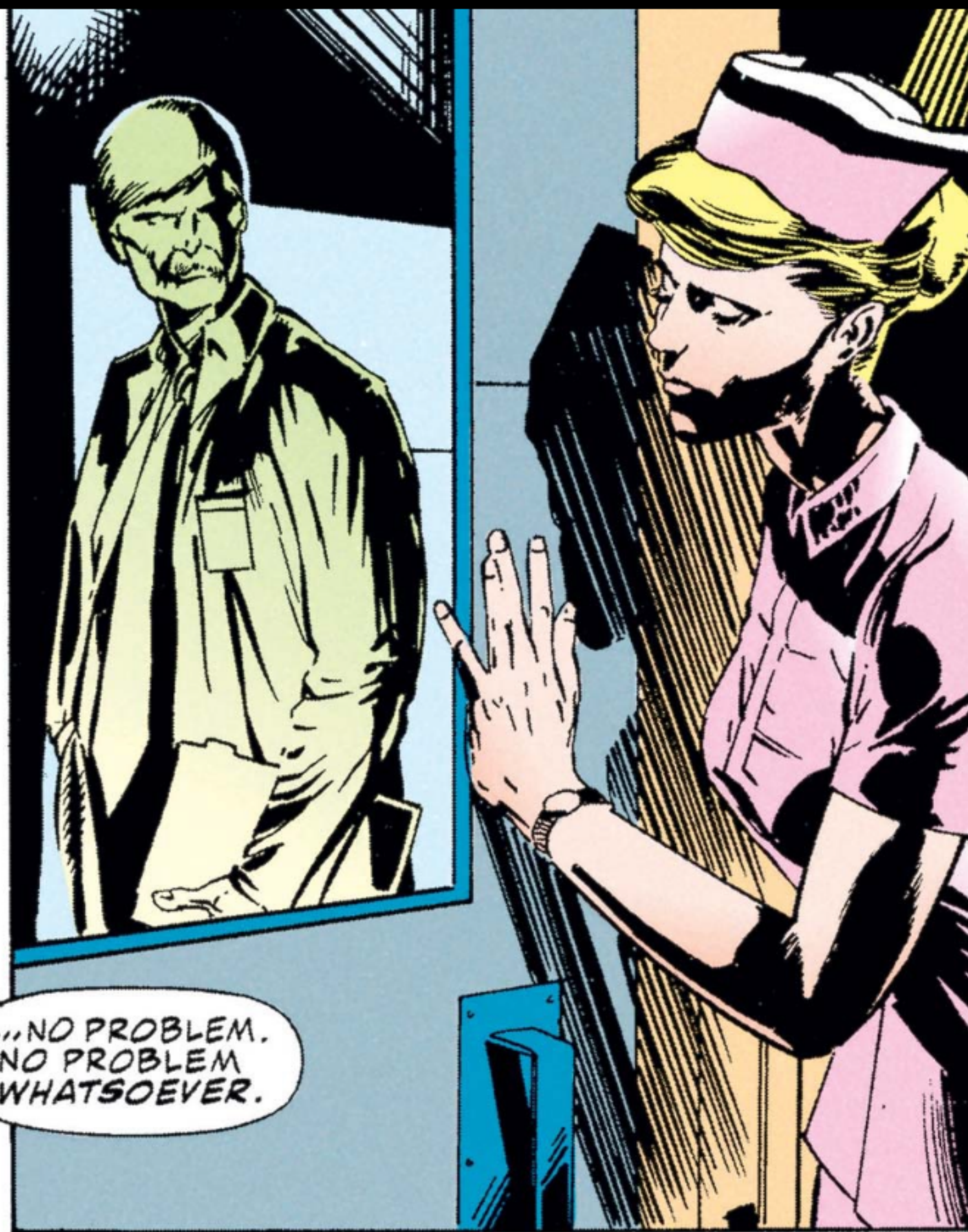
EXCUSE ME, SIR?



YOU CAN'T SMOKE HERE. AND I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD REALLY BE HERE.

THE POLICE ARE CLOSING THIS WING OFF. SECURITY STUFF. I'M SORRY.

THAT'S OKAY, SISTER...



...NO PROBLEM. NO PROBLEM WHATSOEVER.



...AND NO ONE COMES IN WITHOUT AUTHORITY. GOT IT?

GOT IT.

DETECTIVE LAVIANO. I WAS EXPECTING DOCTOR TREAKS.

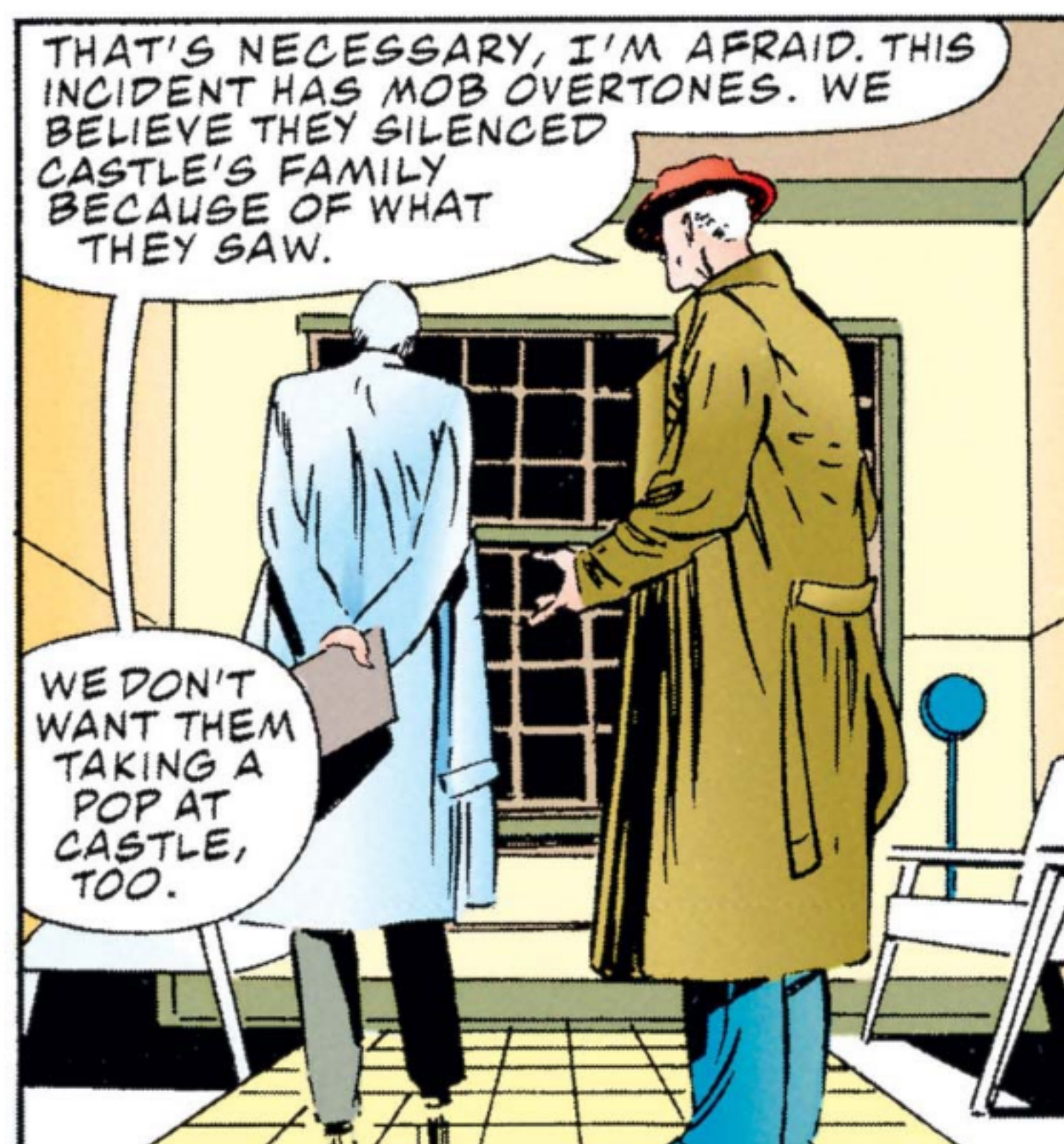
HE'S ON SICK LEAVE. I'M MILES WARREN. THEY DRAGGED ME IN FROM THE EMPIRE STATE CAMPUS TO COVER. MT. SINAI IS MONSTROUSLY SHORT-STAFFED.



I MEAN, WHAT KIND OF CITY IS THIS IF THEY NEED TO DRAG A MAN OFF AN ACADEMIC POSTING TO COVER IN THE TRAUMA WARD WHEN HE'S NOT EVEN A PHYSICIAN?

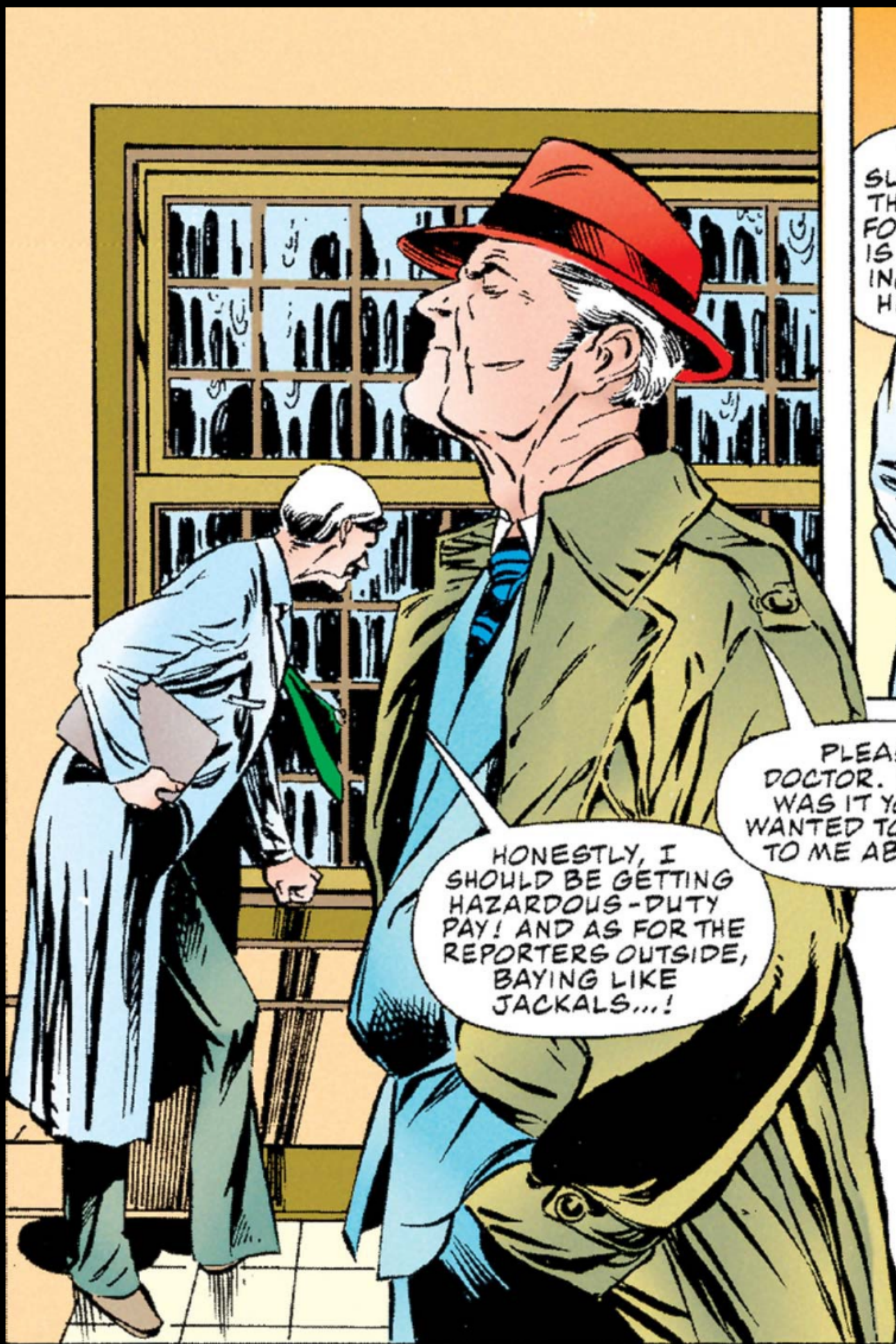
RIGHT.

AND I HAVE TO SAY I'M NOT HAPPY ABOUT THE NUMBER OF POLICE OFFICERS CHOKING THE CORRIDORS.



THAT'S NECESSARY, I'M AFRAID. THIS INCIDENT HAS MOB OVERTONES. WE BELIEVE THEY SILENCED CASTLE'S FAMILY BECAUSE OF WHAT THEY SAW.

WE DON'T WANT THEM TAKING A POP AT CASTLE, TOO.



HONESTLY, I SHOULD BE GETTING HAZARDOUS-DUTY PAY! AND AS FOR THE REPORTERS OUTSIDE, BAYING LIKE JACKALS,...!

PLEASE, DOCTOR. WHAT WAS IT YOU WANTED TO SPEAK TO ME ABOUT?



THE OTHER SURVIVOR OF THE SHOOTING, FORREST HUNT, IS STILL HANGING ON, BUT HE'S WEAK.

HIS FAMILY IS WITH HIM NOW.



SURVIVOR? THE GUY IN THE TREE WAS STILL ALIVE, TOO?!

I'M GOING TO NAIL FORENSICS TO THE FLOOR!

EASY, JOHNNY!



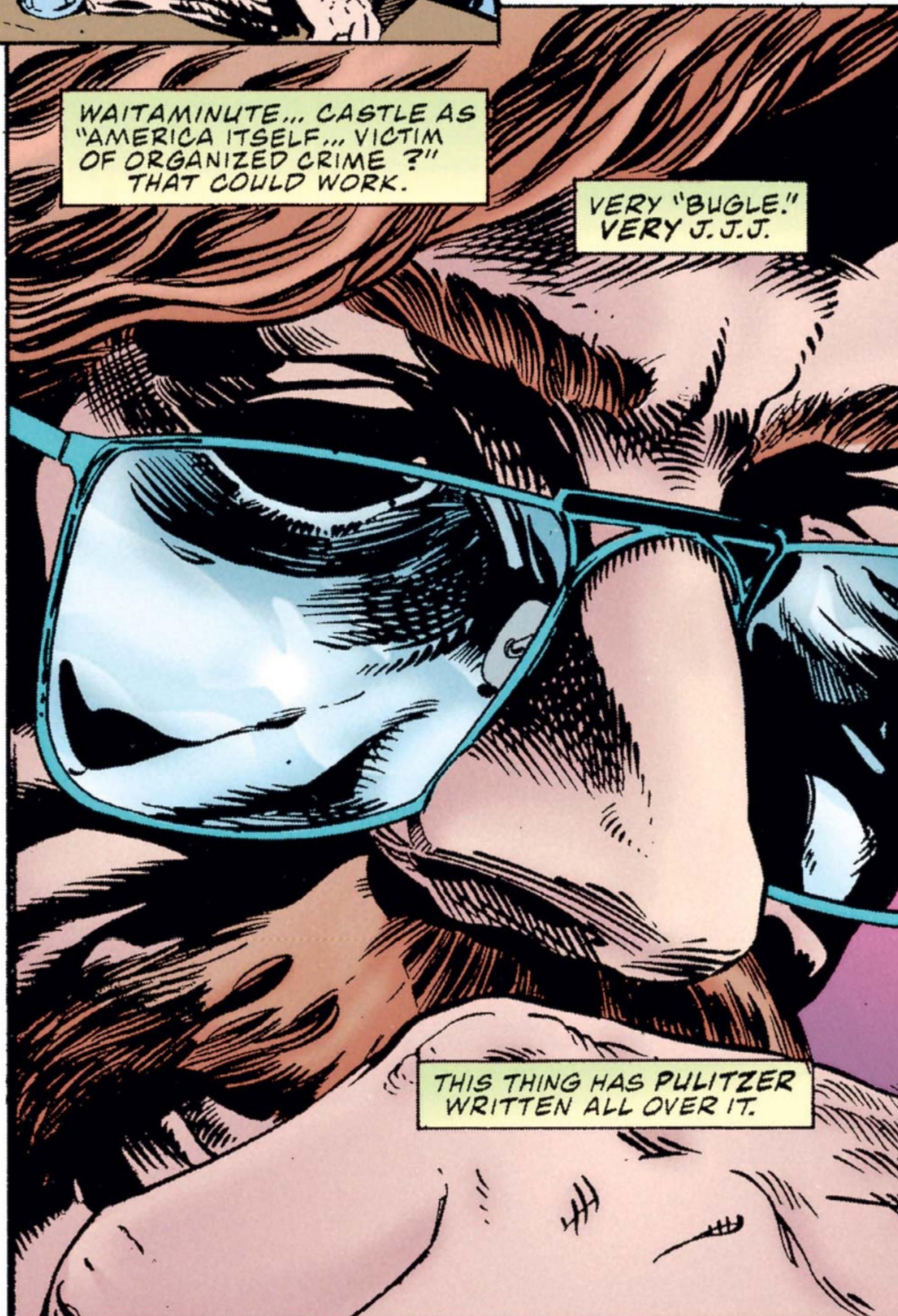
OKAY, OKAY. LOOK, I WANT TO TALK TO THIS HUNT GUY AS SOON AS I CAN.

WITTS? WHEN CASTLE COMES 'ROUND, I DON'T WANT HIM TOLD ABOUT THIS.



CASTLE'S A HEAVYWEIGHT, A WALKING ARMY CORPS. LET'S NOT CREATE A VIGILANTE SITUATION HERE.

WE DON'T WANT A WAR ON OUR HANDS.





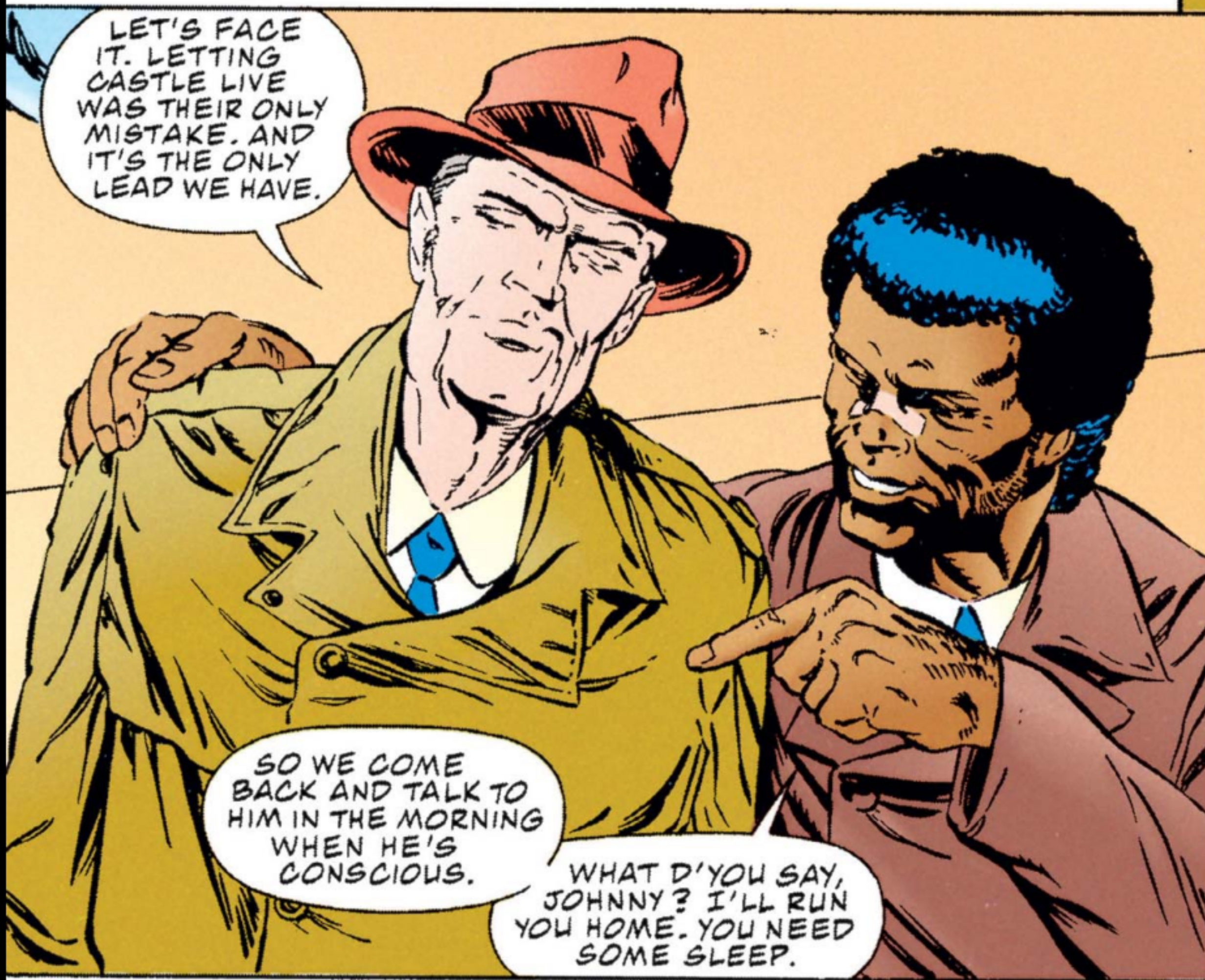
FORREST HUNT JUST DIED. DIDN'T GET SQUAT FROM HIM. GUESS IT ALL HINGES ON CASTLE NOW.

WHAT ABOUT BALLISTICS? FORENSICS IS STILL WORKING STUFF UP.



FORGET IT, STAN. THIS WAS PRO.

IF THEY WERE PREPARED TO WASTE FOUR BYSTANDERS TO KEEP THINGS NEAT, THEY WON'T HAVE LEFT ANY SLOPPY TRACES BEHIND.



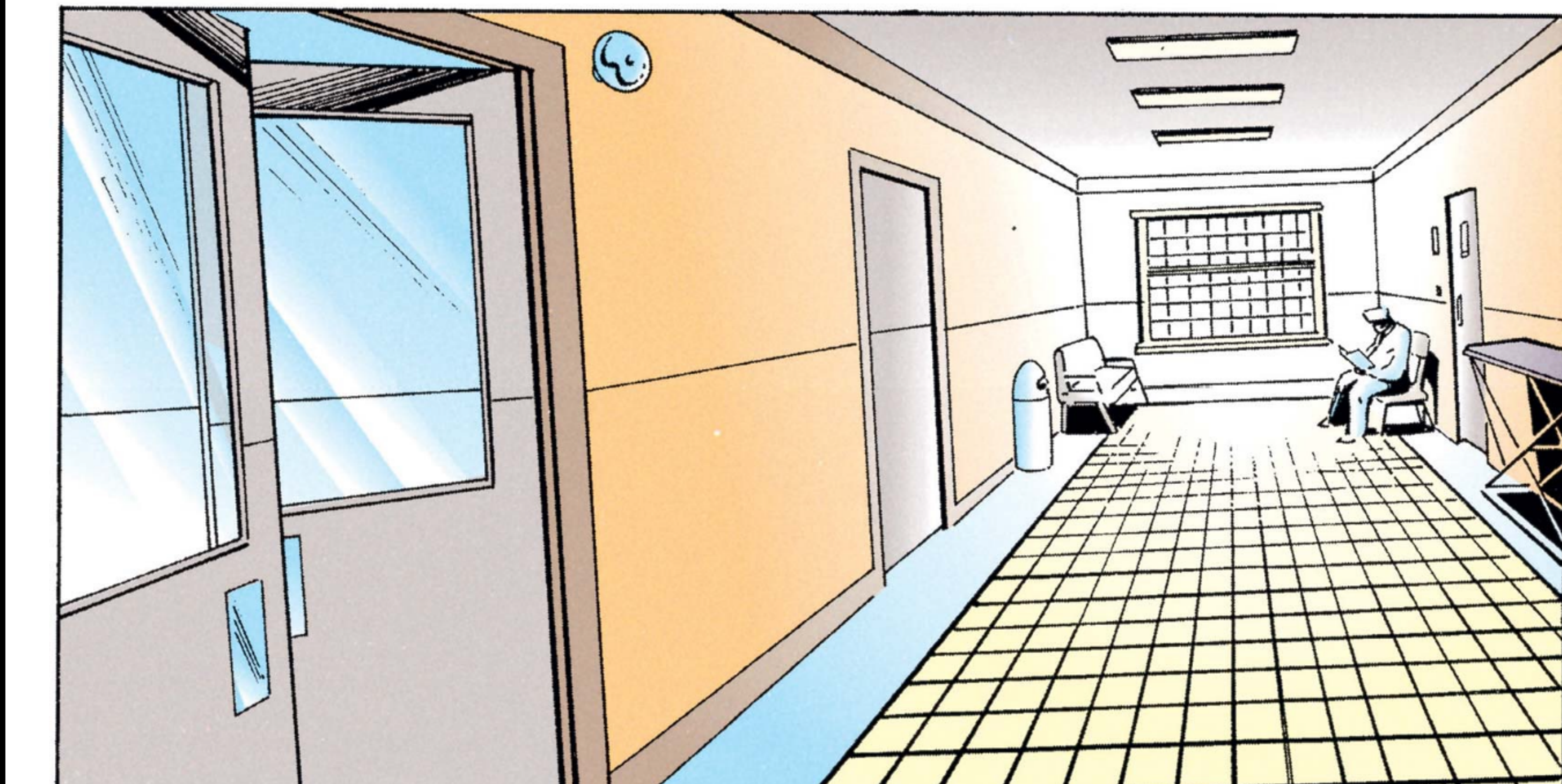
LET'S FACE IT. LETTING CASTLE LIVE WAS THEIR ONLY MISTAKE. AND IT'S THE ONLY LEAD WE HAVE.

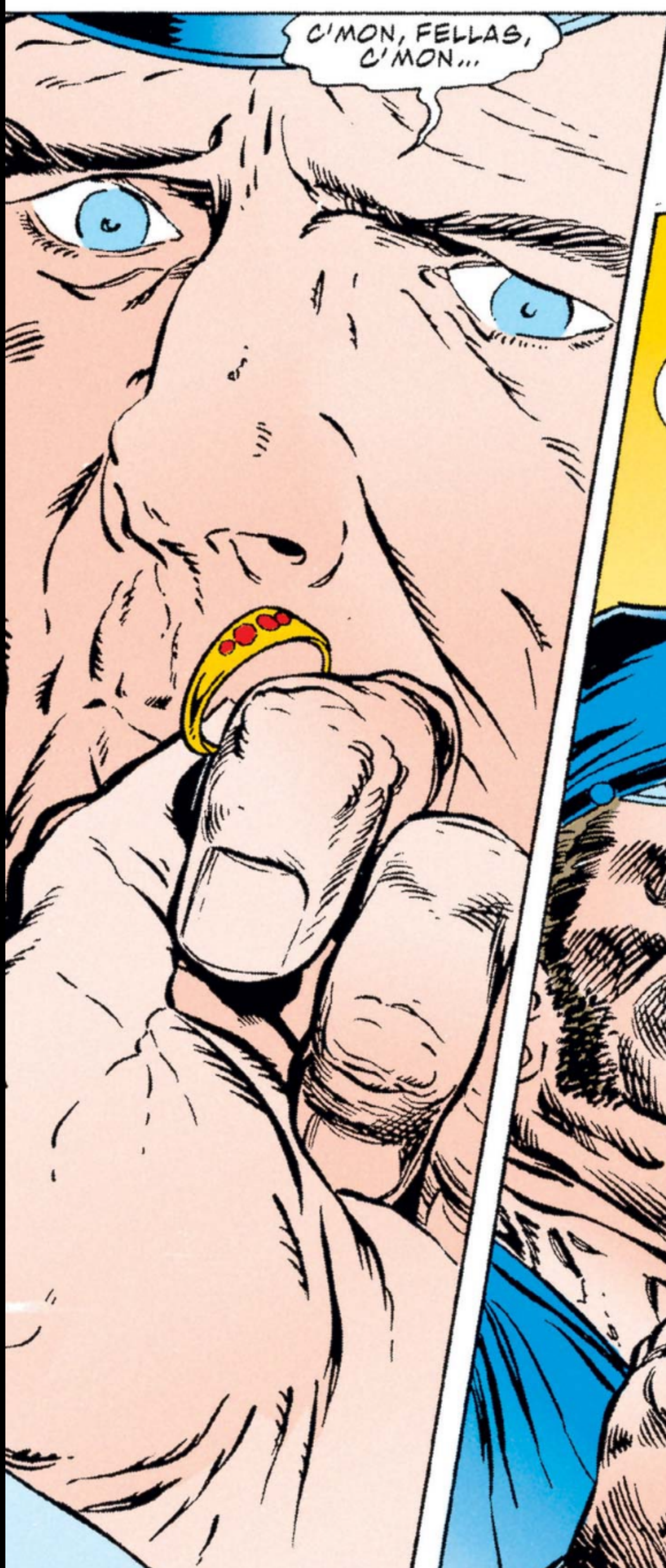
SO WE COME BACK AND TALK TO HIM IN THE MORNING WHEN HE'S CONSCIOUS.

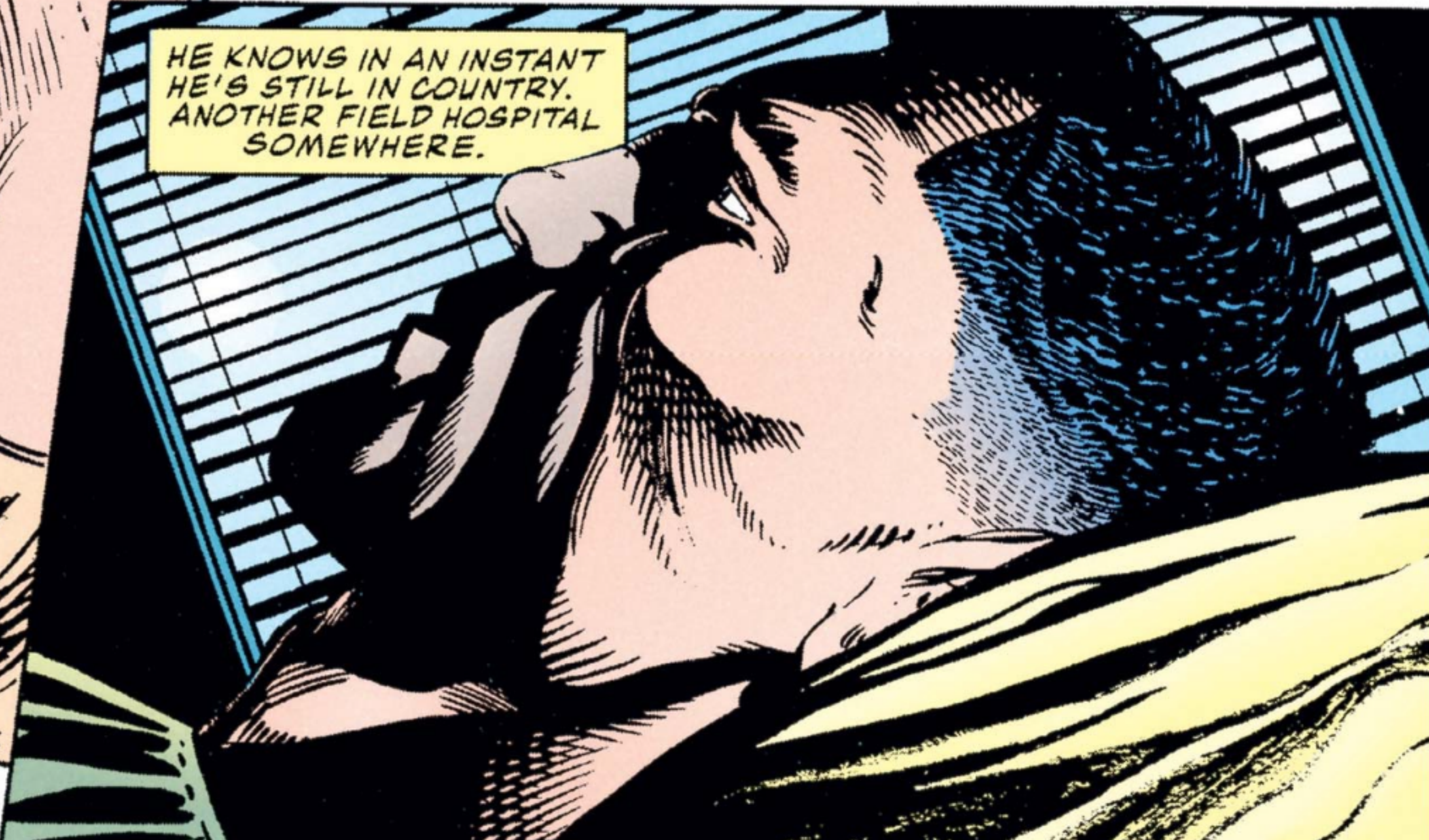
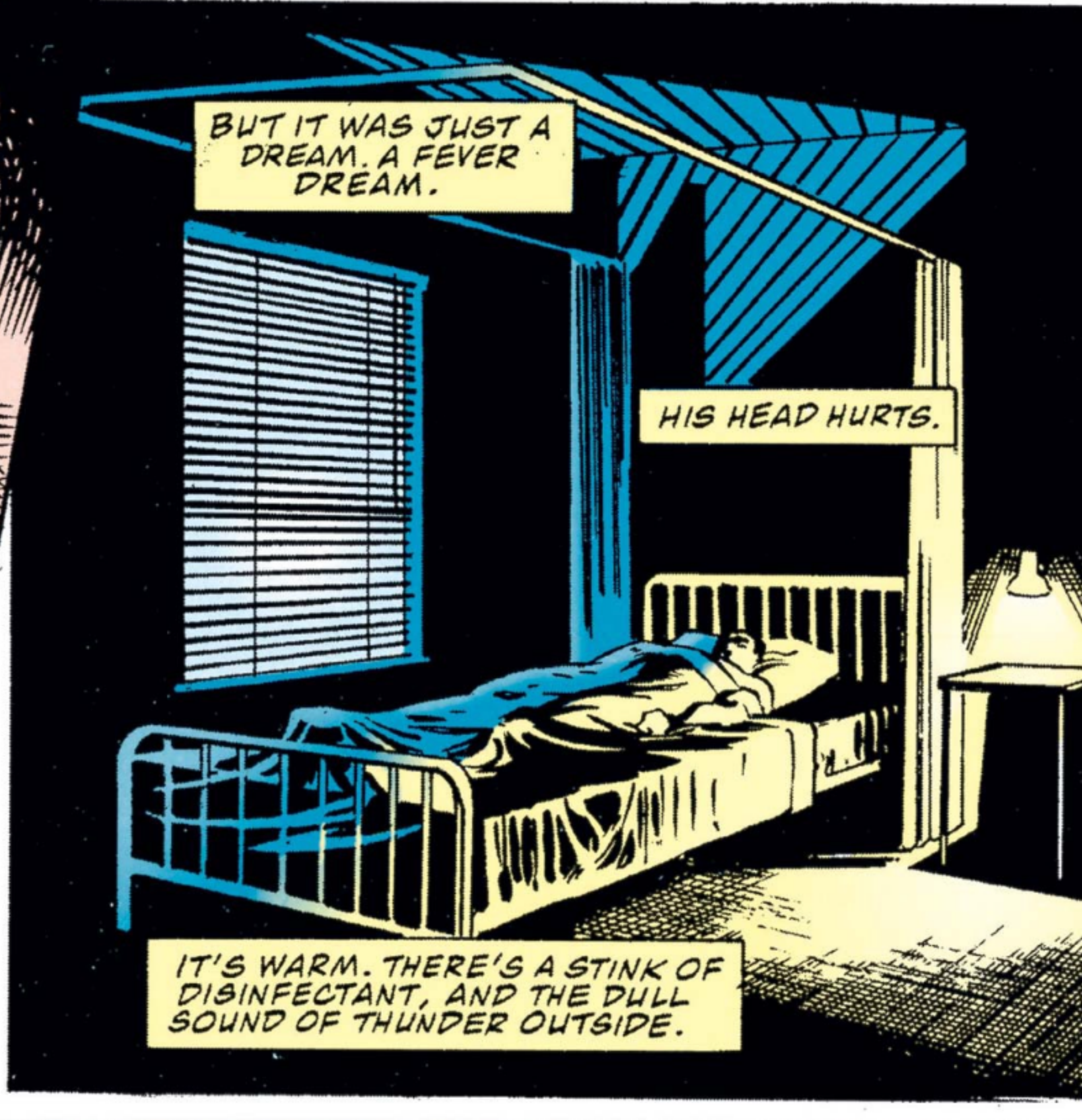
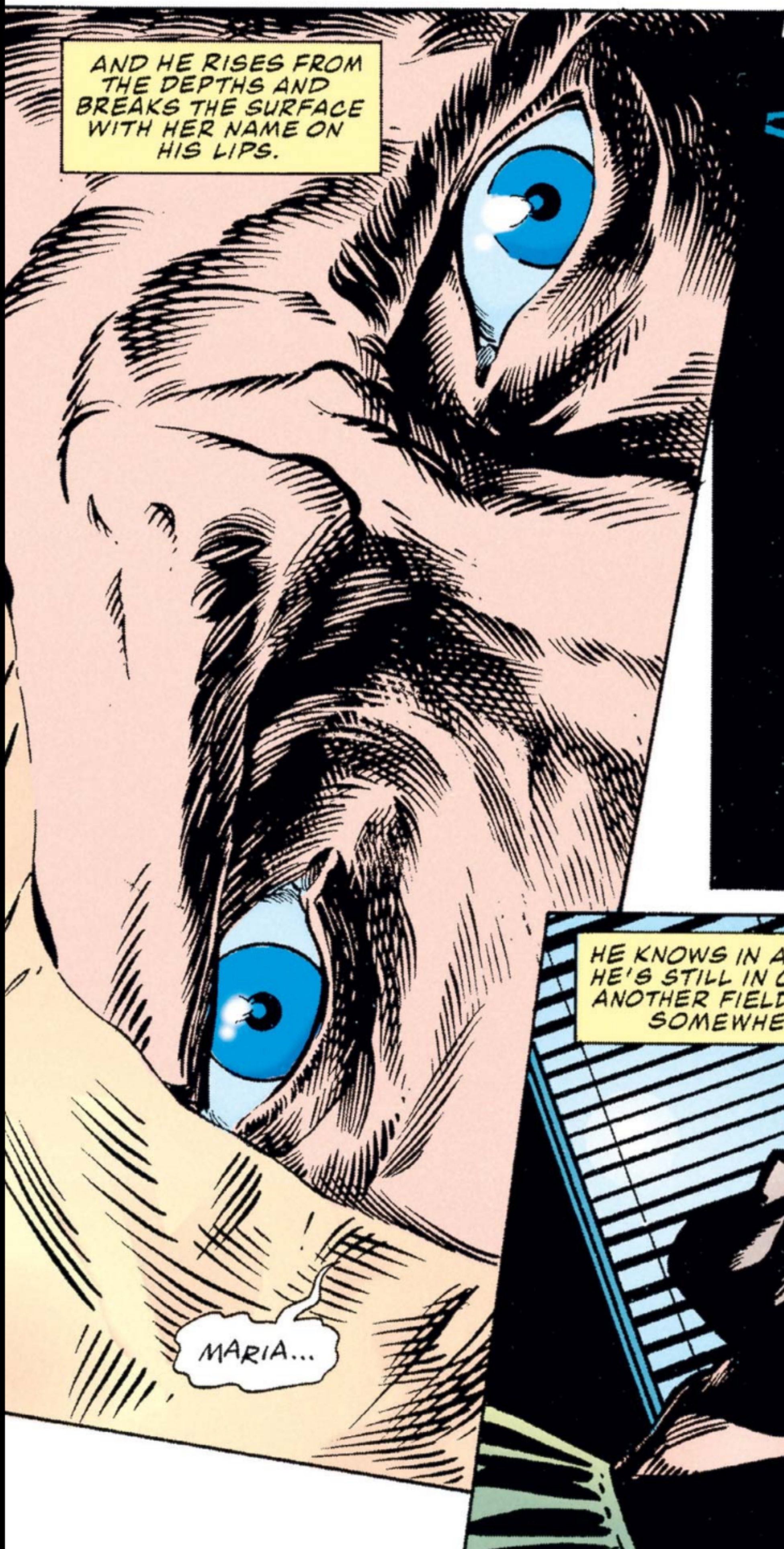
WHAT D'YOU SAY, JOHNNY? I'LL RUN YOU HOME. YOU NEED SOME SLEEP.



HECK, I KNOW I DO.









HE RANSACKS HIS HOLLOW MEMORY AND REMEMBERS GUNS.

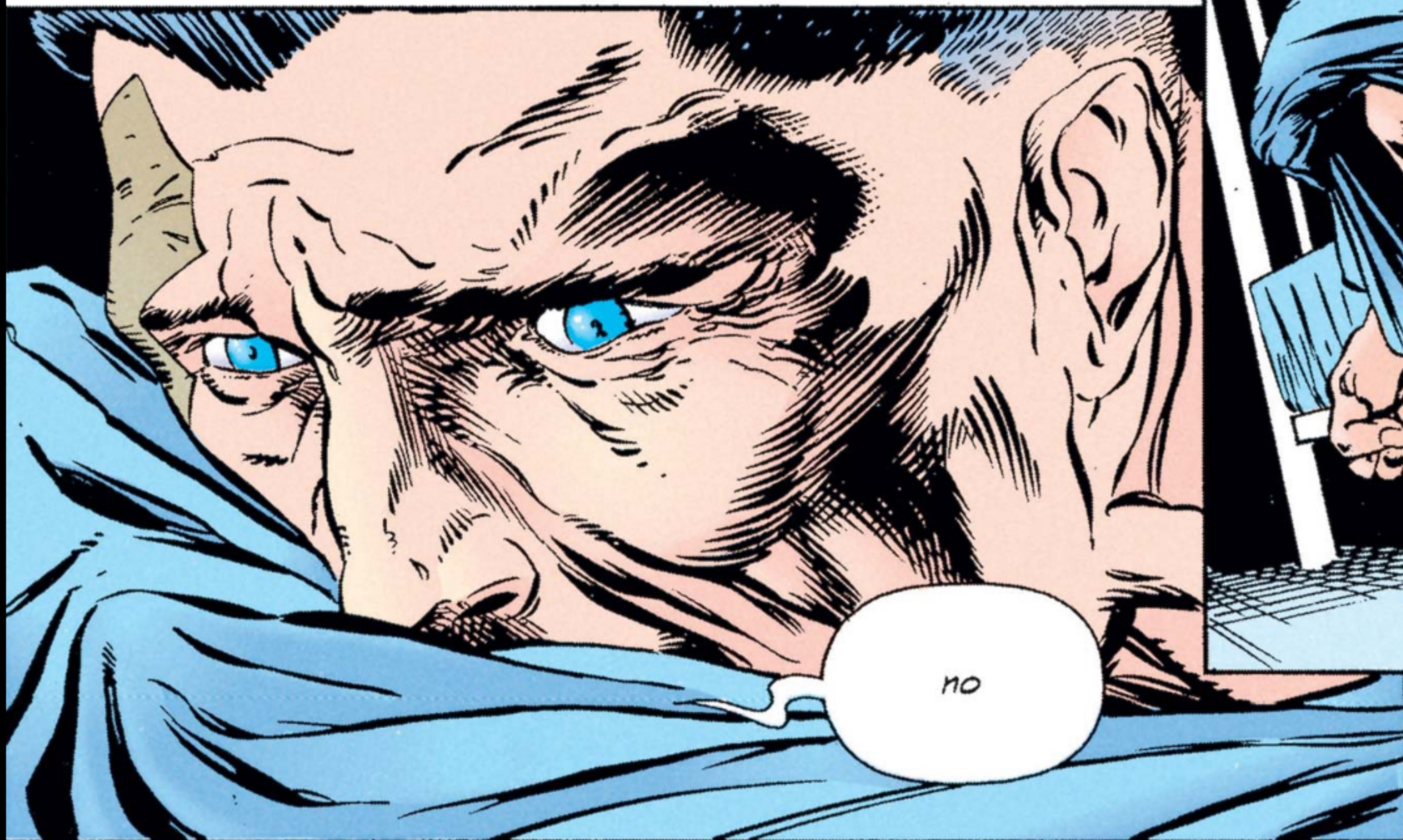
GUNS BOOMING. HIS UNIT... AN AMBUSH, MAYBE?

DID THEY WALK INTO A CROSS-FIRE? HOW MANY DID THEY LOSE? EDDIE... STEELER GUS... TOECAP... COOMBS...?

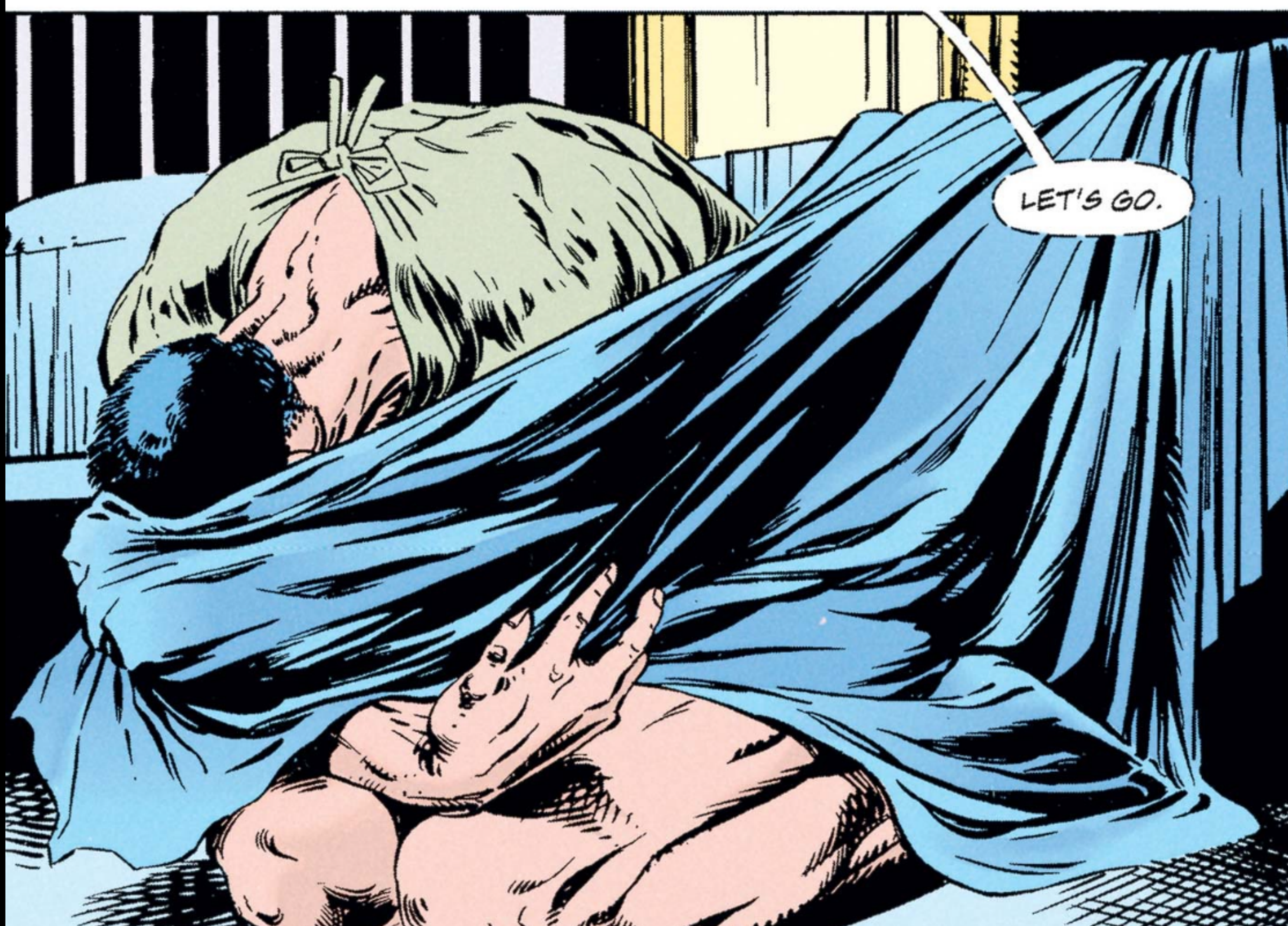


WHILE HE WAS UNDER, THAT TERRIBLE DREAM. BACK HOME ... MARIA AND THE KIDS...

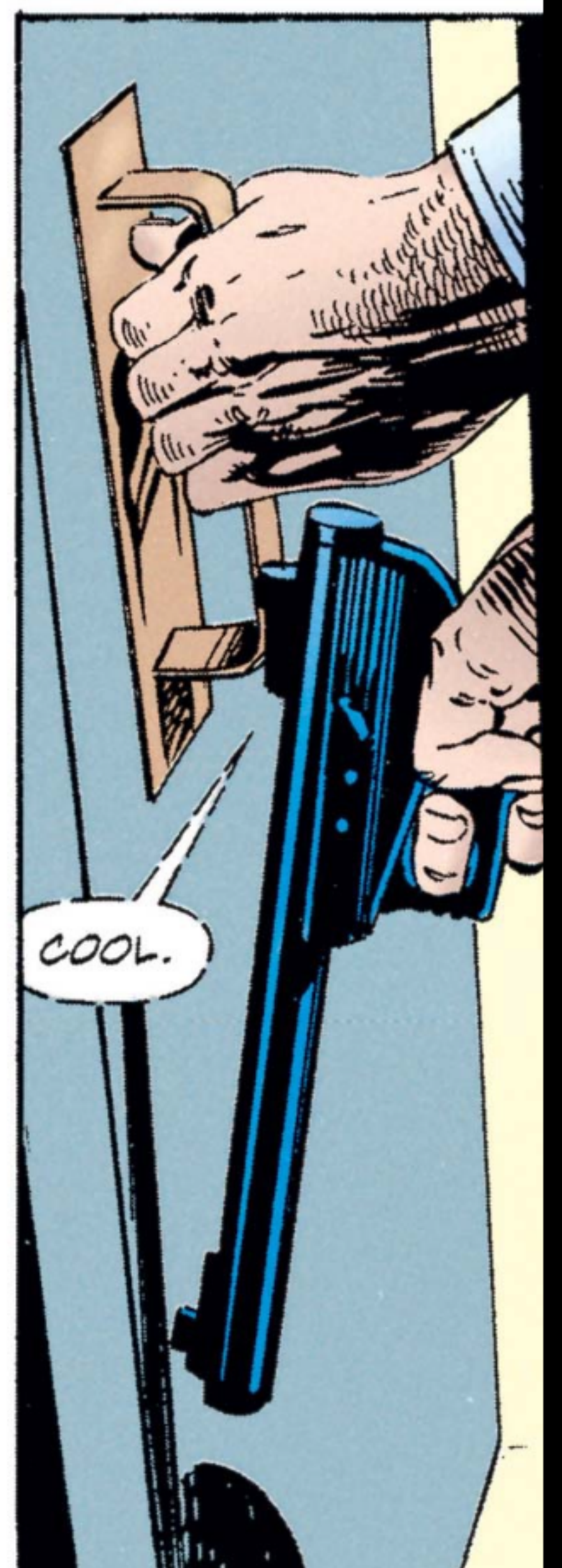
HIS SON'S KITE, DRAGGING OFF THE SHEEP MEADOW, INTO THE TREELINE...



no



LET'S GO.



COOL.



WHOOO! WHAT'S
WRONG WITH THIS
PICTURE?

\$#*!! HE'S
AWAKE!

NOT FOR
LONG...

TO BE
CONTINUED!